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IN PARTY HISTORIES OF THE 1920's.

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SOVIET HISTORIOGRAPHY OF 1905
AS REFLECTED IN PARTY HISTORIES OF THE 1920's

by

EDITH BLOOMFIELD

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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Date June 10, 1966

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We have carefully read the dissertation entitled Soviet Historiography
of 1905 as Reflected in Party Histories of the 1920's

_____ submitted by
Edith Bloomfield in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
and recommend its acceptance. In support of this recommendation we present the following
joint statement of evaluation to be filed with the dissertation.

Mrs. Bloomfield has chosen a topic, "Soviet Historiography of 1905 as Reflected in Party Histories of the 1920's," which is intended primarily to illuminate the problems of how Soviet historiography developed through various stages and secondarily to throw light on the Revolution of 1905 itself. The latter emerges as something of a by-product. The writer does not seek to derive the story of 1905 from the Soviet historical works examined, but rather to analyze the significance of such works by reference to the actual events in a number of instances.

She has written a thesis which necessarily draws on Russian materials (which for her purposes are the sources, though they are secondary treatments of 1905) almost exclusively, reflect very extensive and thorough exploitation of them, and discuss the issues they raise with remarkable objectivity and sophisticated understanding of the tensions between state imperatives and the motives of the historians and historical research groups and agencies during the 1920's. One of the secondary merits of the work is to contribute to the clarification of the organizational and political circumstances under which Soviet historians of the 1920's worked.

Mrs. Bloomfield demonstrates mastery of the techniques necessary for research in modern Russian history (in this instance both pre - and post Revolutionary period), achievement in the realm of writing and organization, and judiciousness in handling extremely controversial historical and political issues. We recommend acceptance of the thesis as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree in history.

DISSERTATION READING COMMITTEE: _____

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	iii
Chapter	
I. PARTY HISTORIOGRAPHY OF 1905	1
A Definition	
Organizational Framework	
Technical and Methodological Problems	
Soviet Sources for the Study of the Revolution of 1905	
II. THEORETICAL PROBLEMS OF 1905	35
Formulation of the Problems	
The Character and Driving Forces of the Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution	
The Role of the Peasant in the Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution	
The Problem of the Revolutionary Transition	
III. TACTICAL PROBLEMS OF 1905	94
The Convocation of the III Congress	
The Formulation of Tactics	
IV. BOLSHEVIK THEORIES AND TACTICS IN ACTION	127
The Soviet Approach to the Narrative History of 1905	
From January to October	
From October to December	
SUMMARY	194
BIBLIOGRAPHY	200

INTRODUCTION

Lenin called the Revolution of 1905 a rehearsal of the Revolution of 1917.¹ Leon Trotsky, too, was to call the year 1905 a prologue to the events of 1917, and "in the prologue all the elements of the drama were included but not carried through."² When, after the October Revolution, they had in fact been carried through, the victorious Bolsheviks could look back to a revolutionary past which had reached its first climax in the fall and winter of 1905. They could now set about to interpret this historical legacy in a way that fitted best in their ideological framework -- a task that they have carried on until the present day.

Armed with the advantages of hindsight and in need for historical self-justification, how did the Bolsheviks view the First Russian Revolution -- that "dress-rehearsal" for the overthrow of tsarism in which their own part was often played so clumsily and where even their most heroic deeds and their most careful planning led only to eventual defeat?

¹V. I. Lenin, "Detskaia bolezn' 'levizny' v kommunizme," Sochineniia (2nd ed., 1932), XXV, p. 176.

²L. Trotsky, The History of the Russian Revolution, (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1934), p. 34.

It is not the aim of this dissertation merely to retell the events of 1905 in the words of Soviet historians. Rather it is to examine how the party historians of the 1920's viewed a revolution in which many of them had taken a personal part. For those among them who were born in the 1870's, 1905 was only the first of two major revolutions to occur in their lifetime. For some of them it was the revolution of their youth, just as it was the first nation-wide revolutionary involvement of their party.

In this connection, it is necessary to explore the nature of party history itself. Who were the leading party historians concerned with writing the history of the 1905 Revolution? What organizations were involved in mobilizing party historians and in guiding the preparation of their work? What were the tasks that faced these organizations and what problems had to be faced by the historians? What sources were available in the 1920's for an analysis of the 1905 Revolution and how were they used?

The principal purpose of this study is an examination of some of the historiographical problems that confronted the party historians of the 1920's in their analysis of the 1905 Revolution. Where, in the total scheme of party history did they place the First Russian Revolution? What was the significance of the 1905 Revolution in the Marxist-Leninist theory and how was this theory reflected in the Soviet interpretation of the Revolution? What was the role of the Bolsheviks in the First Revolution? What were their tactics in the struggle against autocracy and how successfully were these tactics

carried out? In other words, how effective were the Bolsheviks as the vanguard of the working class in 1905 in the estimation of Soviet party historians?

Intertwined with these historiographical problems is the continuing party struggle -- a struggle that began before 1905 and reached a particularly relentless intensity during the 1920's -- in which the party historians were both interpreters and participants.

Because the Soviet history of the Revolution of 1905 is the history of Bolshevik involvement in it, it is sometimes difficult to separate the ideological precepts which motivated the party leaders and party workers from their active participation in the revolutionary events. The combination of theory and its practical application is at times so tightly interwoven in party histories that the description of virtually every action may be found accompanied by an appropriate theoretical explanation. In order to see this entanglement in its clearest light, it is necessary to separate the theoretical elements from the practical ones, yet in order to recreate the conclusions reached by Soviet historians in their interpretation of the revolution, it is also necessary to examine this unity.

Fortunately, Soviet literature on the 1905 Revolution is sufficiently varied so as to include theoretical and practical subject matter both in separate and in combined form. While most larger works and particularly Soviet textbooks combined both revolutionary theory and practice in their pages, much of the monograph literature

and many of the shorter articles which appeared in the party journals of the 1920's could not, because of their more specialized nature, achieve this unity. As a result it is possible to trace without difficulty the historiographic progression implicit in the Soviet interpretation of 1905 -- a progression in which Lenin's political ideas served as the basis for the revolutionary tactics of the Bolsheviks in 1905 and whose implementation in the course of the revolution highlighted with singular effectiveness the interplay of revolutionary theories and their practical results.

Even though the First Russian Revolution officially took place from January 1905 to June 1907 -- from "Bloody Sunday" to the dissolution of the II Duma and the open return of "reaction" -- we shall limit ourselves here to the year 1905, for it was during the first twelve months alone that Soviet historians saw the principal revolutionary ideas formulated and adapted to reality. It is not surprising that a large number of Soviet historians presented the year 1905 as a complete story in itself -- a story that began with the massacre of defenseless and leaderless workers in St. Petersburg and ended with a Bolshevik-led proletarian armed uprising in Moscow.

The importance of the two capitals in the history of the 1905 Revolution is undeniable and overshadows to a considerable degree events that took place elsewhere in the empire. Although detailed information concerning the revolution in the provinces abounds in the voluminous literature which was published during the 1920's, Soviet historians tended to reduce the regional revolts to simple

reflections of the ideological and organizational efforts of the revolutionaries in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Thus, we too shall follow the historians from the Winter Palace to the narrow streets of Presnia and seek in the provincial towns and in the countryside the echoes of the Revolution of 1905.

CHAPTER I

PARTY HISTORIOGRAPHY OF 1905

A Definition

The most obvious definition of "party history" is a rephrasing of the expression into an alternate syntactical form: "the history of the party." "Party historians," consequently, are historians who delve into the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

A closer look, however, shows that this straightforward definition, although correct, leaves a great deal unsaid. How, one may ask, does party history differ from the history of Russia in modern times? What does it include or exclude to give it its specific label? What qualifications are necessary to become a party historian? How does he differ from a traditional historian? Can not all Soviet historians who voice the official party line in history be called "party historians?"

A survey of the topics treated in party historical journals suggests that party history is distinguished mainly for its concentration on the Russian revolutionary movement, the growth, struggle and eventual victory of Bolshevism, and the ideological development

of Marxism-Leninism. Since there is no event or current of thought in the history of modern Russia and the Soviet Union that cannot be shown to involve Bolshevik activities and ideology, party history often becomes synonymous with modern Russian history from the last quarter of the 19th century to the present. It neither includes nor excludes any specific topic -- it merely relates every topic in modern Russian history to the history of the Communist Party and thus tends to be self-centered rather than a part of world history.

The history of the party ... is the science concerned with the growth and toughening of the revolutionary party of the Russian proletariat in its struggle with tsarism, with the bourgeoisie, with Russian and international opportunism and in the struggle with deviationists in its own ranks. The history of the party is an applied science for the Leninist theory of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, for [the] theory of the construction of a Communist society.¹

We may say then that a "party historian" is an individual who specializes in a Bolshevik-oriented history of modern Russia. But to this an important additional qualification must be noted: He must have the ability to write in a way that will be acceptable to the victorious protagonists of the story he describes -- the leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Usually, a person who has this capability is himself close to the Party. During the early years of the Soviet regime, a party historian may have been an actual participant in the events he described: a memoirist with some degree of sophistication; a former

¹ Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 11, 1929, p. 264.

journalist, whose experience as a writer goes back to the days of the early Bolshevik underground newspapers; or, he may have been a trained historian, working with archival material, who at one time had been an official of the party or government; or, finally, he may have been primarily a functionary who published a historical essay now and then.

In contrast to this "old guard" of party historians, with its own dramatic revolutionary background and party involvement, there was a group of professional historians who taught and trained the younger generation in the "science" of history and carried on research in their particular specialization. Naturally, many of them had also participated in revolutionary events, for these events were a part of their own lives. During the 1920's many of the leading historians were contemporaries of Lenin, of his friends and his enemies. Consequently, the history of the Communist Party or of the development of Marxism-Leninism were subjects of more than academic interest to them. But still, they were a group apart from the memoirists, journalists and functionaries. It was the quality of their work -- the lack of amateurishness in their treatment of a historical subject, that placed this group on a higher scholarly level. Often they bore the title "Marxist historian" rather than "party historian," suggesting not only a more scientific background and performance, but also the fact that they were conversant with subjects other than the history of the party alone. When a "Marxist historian" who was also a member of the Communist Party, chose the history of Bolshevism, or a related subject, as his specialization, he could be considered a party

historian in the best tradition of Marxist scholarship. Surely the best known historian in this group was M. N. Pokrovsky.

While the two groups usually published their articles in separate journals, there was, nevertheless, a great deal of interaction and many individual historians participated in several or all of the historical organizations of his locality.² By the end of the 1920's the two groups became, for all practical purposes, a single "cadre." By the mid-1930's, a newly trained generation of historians began to write officially-approved histories. All Soviet historians now had to accept Party supervision in their work, but only those among them who specialized in the history of the Communist Party, in the history of the revolutionary movement of Russia, or in Marxist-Leninist thought, became the "party historians" we know today.

In the West the term became one of derision, denoting a propagandist and a "party hack." In the Soviet Union, it is given an individual who is able to enlighten the masses with a correct interpretation of the past and who provides the layman with a guide for the future.

²See "Biografiia M. N. Pokrovskogo," Istorik Marksist, IX, 1928, pp. 79-83.

Organizational Framework

Let us examine the writing of party history in the 1920's in greater detail. First, the organizational framework that coordinated and guided the work will be delineated, and secondly, a short survey will be made of the technical and methodological problems faced by those who studied the revolution of 1905. An understanding of the conditions under which the study of party history was carried on and an acquaintance with the raw materials available to the historians will help to form a more complete picture of Soviet party historiography and the place of the 1905 Revolution in it.

The history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in all its ramifications became the subject of organized research from the very moment that it was physically possible to set to work. Even before the official end of the period of War Communism, in 1920, there had been created in Moscow the Commission for the Study of the History of the Communist Party (Istpart). By a decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of December 1, 1921, Istpart became one of its sections.³

It soon became an organization whose branches on the local level followed the general organizational structure of the Party itself.

³Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia, (1953), XVIII, p. 225. See also Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 5, 1930, which contains articles commemorating the 100th issue of the journal and sheds light on the early days of Istpart.

With headquarters in Moscow and with a large supporting institution in Petrograd, Istpart was subdivided into smaller historical units affiliated with the party committees of the provinces, oblasts, cities and districts, all of which were subordinated administratively and ideologically to the central agency, which, in turn was directly responsible to the Central Committee. By 1928, a special Section for Local Istpart Departments "carried out the general leadership and control for the work of local Istpart Departments and confirmed their literary and publishing plans."⁴

The special tasks of Istpart included the collecting, preserving, publishing and scholarly analysis of documents and materials pertaining to the history of the party and particularly the history of the October Revolution. It was also charged with the task of organizing political ties with the provincial archives.⁵ The results of the research carried on by Istpart were published in two journals: Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, which was Istpart's central organ, and Krasnaia letopis', the journal of the "Petrograd Bureau of the Commission on the History of the October Revolution and the Russian Communist Party," a title that was later shortened to the "Historical Journal of the Leningrad Istpart."

⁴Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 10, 1928, p. 220.

⁵Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia, op. cit., p. 225.

While Istpart had also been commissioned by the Central Committee to publish and comment upon the works of Marx and Engels, a separate institution devoted only to the study of Marxism had been created in 1920: the Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels Institute. At first it was under the administration of the Socialist Academy, but after June 1922 it became affiliated with the Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR.⁶ To ensure centralized control over the publication of works pertaining to Marx and Engels and the annotations to their writings, the Marx-Engels Institute was recognized as the only institution in the Soviet Union with the authority to study the writings of Marx and Engels, and to collect documents, manuscripts and other material concerned with the lives and activities of these two men.

It is not very clear why Istpart was placed under the jurisdiction of the Party while the Marx-Engels Institute was responsible to the Soviet government.⁷ Regardless of the reasoning

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ K. F. Shteppa, Russian Historians and the Soviet State, (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1962), p. 20. It is not very clear under whose jurisdiction Istpart at first really was. A detailed article on the history of the Leningrad Bureau of Istpart in Krasnaia letopis' placed it originally under the joint control of the VTsIK and the TsK RKP(b), although in its organizational structure, and judging by its full title, Istpart was a CC-controlled institution. (Krasnaia letopis', No. 1, 1934, p. 155.)

which motivated this division of labor, on February 15, 1924, it was the Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR and the Council of Ministers who established yet another organization: the Lenin Institute. Its tasks were self-evident. They included the analysis and publication of the writings of Lenin as well as the biographical study of the recently deceased leader of the Soviet Union. The creation of the Lenin Institute was also strongly endorsed by the Party. The decision of the XIII Party Congress concerning the study and mass distribution of the works of Lenin became the sample program of the Institute.⁸

The life of Lenin, and especially his writings, cannot readily be separated from the history of the Party. Thus, Istpart and the Lenin Institute were duplicating much of each other's work, and it was only natural that the two organizations should merge. When, by a decree of the Central Committee of May 10, 1928, Istpart was united with the Lenin Institute, the Soviet Union was beginning a new era, both in the political and economic administration of the country and in its control over the study of history. The merger of Istpart and the Lenin Institute did not mean that the local Istpart sections were to be liquidated. Their number was reduced⁹ but their organization was

⁸Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia, XVIII, p. 226.

⁹Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, Nos. 11-12, 1928, pp. 362 and 363. On October 22, 1928, 38 local Istpart sections were confirmed by the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and by the same decree 20 Istpart offices were closed.

"strengthened." Their work was to remain the same as before but the Lenin Institute was to be the "basic center around which all this work will turn..."¹⁰

The final step in the consolidation of the three organizations occurred in November 1931, when the Central Executive Committee decided upon the merger of the Marx-Engels Institute with the Lenin Institute, thus forming a single Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute affiliated with the Central Committee of the Communist Party.¹¹

Both in their separate and merged form, these three organizations may be considered the stronghold of the "old guard" of veteran Bolshevik journalists, officials and memoir writers. The professional historians, on the other hand, included many non-party people who were more closely associated with the universities and higher educational institutions. It was characteristic of this period of relative freedom from Party interference in the purely academic world that this group of historians, with its pre-revolutionary training and prestige was allowed considerable leniency in its work and organization.

Among the earliest historical research centers was the History Institute of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Moscow State University. It had been created in accordance with a decision of the Council of Ministers on March 4, 1921, along with

¹⁰ Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 10, 1928, p. 221.

¹¹ Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia, XVIII, p. 226.

other research institutes,¹² and thus was not altogether an independent entity. In September 1925, all the research institutes were transferred from the Faculty of Social Sciences (FON) to RANION (Russian Association of Scientific Research Institutes of Social Sciences). Significantly, neither the Director of the Institute, D. M. Petrushevsky, nor many of the leading members, were members of the Communist Party.¹³

In addition to the five basic sections of the History Institute,¹⁴ a subsection was organized in the fall of 1926 to deal specifically with recent Russian history and was headed by the party historian V. I. Nevsky.¹⁵ Here was already a clear indication that when it came to matters concerning the history of the Party, a reliable Communist could best fill the post.

A Leningrad section of RANION's Institute of History was created in January 1927 when its collegium was approved by GUS (State Scientific Council).¹⁶

¹²Istorik Marksist, V, 1927, p. 276.

¹³Shteppa, op. cit., p. 19.

¹⁴Ancient, medieval, modern, Russian history and the history of non-European societies and colonial politics (which was later joined with "modern history"). In 1923, in connection with the joining of the Institute of Sociology, there was created also a section of ethnology. Istorik Marksist, V, 1927, p. 276.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 278. The Collegium included G. S. Zaidel', S. A. Zakher, A. M. Pankratova, A. E. Presniakov (Director), and E. V. Tarle.

Aside from carrying on research in all branches of history, the Institute served as a history teachers' college and a training school for workers in research institutions. Thus it was closely associated with the higher educational institutions both Communist and non-party (KOMVUZ and VUZ).

While allowing the pre-revolutionary historians, centered around the universities and the Academy of Sciences, to continue their work undisturbed, the Party was, throughout the 1920's, attempting to replace them as soon as possible with a new group of Soviet-trained historians. For this reason it had begun to create a number of "Communist universities" which were to lead a parallel existence alongside the established universities. One of the better known of these, the Red Professors' Institute was organized already in 1921 and offered specialized courses and seminars in history, philosophy and the social sciences in general. By 1928 there existed 19 such Communist universities throughout the country, attended by 8,400 students.¹⁷

In the same spirit, the Soviet government had also set up a parallel body to the Academy of Sciences: The Socialist (later renamed the Communist) Academy, which was subordinated to the Central Executive Committee of the government. Despite its official sponsorship, the Communist Academy was able, during the NEP years, to remain beyond the range of the power struggle which was taking place

¹⁷ Leonard Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, (New York: Random House, 1959), pp. 342-343.

in the Soviet government and the Communist Party. In January 1927, its Presidium still included such controversial figures as Preobrazhensky, Riazanov and Bukharin.¹⁸

The Society of Marxist Historians, created in the mid-1920's, was a branch of this Communist Academy. It held its first meeting in July 1925 and began to function officially a year later. As a part of the Communist Academy, it was hardly an independent institution. Yet, it was the Society's mixed membership of party and non-party people which was a matter of particular pride to the organization. M. N. Pokrovsky, the guiding spirit of the Society and, by the end of the decade, the leading Soviet historian, felt that even more non-party Marxist historians should join the Society and lamented the disproportionate make-up of the membership. "... we had strongly hoped that we would attract a fairly wide circle of non-party historians who are in sympathy with us," he told a gathering of Marxist historians in 1927. Yet, the disappointing result proved to be that approximately 80% of the Society's members were members of the Party and only 20% were non-party people.¹⁹ While Pokrovsky urged that greater effort be exerted to attract non-party historians, he still expressed pleasure in the fact that even without outside help, the Communist members of the Society had been able to achieve great progress in their historical work.²⁰

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Istorik Marksist, V, 1927, p. 268.

²⁰Ibid.

P. O. Gorin, a leading member of the Society and well-known party historian, joined Pokrovsky in emphasizing the mixed membership of the organization. In his report to the general meeting of the Society of Marxist Historians in April 1927, he also dwelled upon the voluntary affiliation of the historians. It was a free association of historians, he said, "it was open to every Marxist historian,"²¹ with no pressure or propaganda being carried on to recruit anyone.

Aside from the disproportionate party membership of the Society, a further unbalancing feature was the prevalence of Muscovites. In 1927, the 177 members (90 regular members and 87 corresponding members) were nearly all historians from Moscow. Conversely, all the historians of consequence in Moscow were members of the Society.²² The obvious reason, according to Gorin, was that before this date few localities could muster a sufficiently solid core of Marxist historians around which "sympathetic" non-party historians could rally.²³

The all-encompassing functions of the Society of Marxist Historians is clearly seen in its working program. In his report to the 1927 meeting of Marxist Historians, Pokrovsky singled out as a principal task of the Society "the organization of anniversary jubilees."²⁴

²¹Ibid., p. 272.

²²Ibid. In 1927 there were 79 regular members and 66 corresponding members from Moscow. The out-of-town group was made up of 11 regular members and 21 corresponding members.

²³Ibid., p. 275.

²⁴Ibid., p. 268.

In this the Society was not unique: the pages of Istpart journals and the programs of party historical institutions throughout the country reflected a similar rigid planning of research around the celebration of historical anniversaries. Thus, 1923 (two years before the birth of the Society) was marked with the commemoration of the anniversary of the II Congress of the RSDLP. The year 1925 was the occasion for a great deal of research on the Revolution of 1905, the Pugachevshchina (150th anniversary), and the Decembrist uprising of 1825. There were also jubilee offerings made in honor of Bakunin and Shchapov, with hardly enough time left to begin the exhaustive work needed to prepare the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution in 1927.

In the plans made for these anniversary research projects, the Soviet historians were presented with two conflicting assignments: on the one hand, their work had to be sufficiently scholarly to meet the traditional standards of the academic world; on the other, the writing had to be of a popular nature. A major reason for preparing jubilee material in the first place was to familiarize the masses with Russian and Soviet history. Hence the style and content had to attract the ordinary workman and the central issues of the story had to be clear beyond any chance of misinterpretation. Within the Society of Marxist Historians, jubilee work was done by the section of "Russia VKP(b)," headed by M. N. Pokrovsky. Because much of it was intended for mass distribution, the Society worked with Agitprop

and Istpart, although Professor Gorin felt compelled to add that the Society maintained its full authority.²⁵

The Society's other major function was to serve as a meeting place, a "tribune" for the history teachers and professors affiliated with the higher educational institutions. Thus, in its work of popularizing party history it resembled a party-operated institution, but in its more scholarly aspects and in its mixed membership, it also resembled the History Institute of RANION.

Perhaps the clearest description of the functions of the Society of Marxist Historians can be found in the statements advertising its publication, Istoriik Marksist:

The aims of the journal are the scientific treatment of problems of historical scholarship in the area of concrete history as well as in its methodology and the methodology of the teaching of history. At the same time, one of the primary tasks of the journal is the struggle against bourgeois historical thought in all its different forms, as well as against the distortions and vulgarizations of the historical methods of Marx and Lenin.

In the journal there will appear articles on the development of historical science in the USSR and abroad in the form of special research, historiographical surveys and critical bibliographical reviews.²⁶

Besides M. N. Pokrovsky and P. O. Gorin, who have already been mentioned, the journal's editors in 1928 included D. Ia. Kin, N. M. Lukin,

²⁵Ibid., p. 275. A further proof of the Society's independence, according to Gorin, was the fact that it had asked for no government grants, but rather depended on membership fees.

²⁶Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 9, 1928, p. 224.

I. I. Mints, S. M. Monosov, Ts. Fridliand, A. V. Shestakov, and the party historian par excellence, E. Iaroslavsky.

It is quite evident that in the sphere of party history a great deal of duplication was taking place. Indeed, for reasons of efficiency alone, an increase in the centralization of all the institutions and its historians -- both party and non-party scholars -- may have been fully justified. But the end of the 1920's witnessed a greater upheaval in historical circles than a mere tightening of the administrative structure. The first large-scale purge directed against "bourgeois" historians began in 1929. Only a year earlier "bourgeois" and Marxist historians had still appeared together at international historical congresses in the West.²⁷ Now, with the government's policy of liquidating all "class enemies" in preparation for the introduction of the First Five Year Plan, many leading historians found themselves severely restricted in their teaching and research. Some were expelled outright from academic institutions and others -- Got'e, Platonov, Tarle, Likhachev, Liubavsky, for instance -- were sent into exile.²⁸

Traditional objectivity in history became a form of treason and the party line was to be accepted without question. This first wave of purges against the elder generation of historians with "bourgeois,"

²⁷C. E. Black, (ed.), Rewriting Russian History. Soviet Interpretations of Russia's Past, (New York: Praeger, 1957), p. 7. See also I. Mints, "Marksisty na istoricheskoi nedele v Berline i VI mezhdunarodnom kongresse istorikov v Norvegii," Istoriik Marksist, IX, 1928, pp. 84-96.

²⁸Shteppa, op. cit., p. 49.

"eclectic," or "pluralistic" tendencies reached its greatest intensity in 1930-1.²⁹ But hardly had it abated when a second and probably much more significant purge swept away those who helped purge the first group.

Beginning in 1931, when Pokrovsky was still alive, and reaching its fullest force in 1934, two years after his death, this second wave brought about the complete downfall of Russia's foremost historian and discredited what for a number of years had officially been the sanctioned Marxist school of history.

By the mid-1930's an entirely new, streamlined organization for the study of party history had emerged. There was no longer any room for speculations and open discussions. The party line had to be followed, and for party historians after 1938 that meant a strict adherence to the interpretation worked out in Stalin's History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Organizationally, the Communist Academy merged with the Academy of Sciences, which by now had become so thoroughly infiltrated by Communists that all semblance of independence from the Party had completely disappeared.³⁰ The displacement of "unreliable" elements in the academic world had been accomplished as a result of the purges, and thus the Communist universities of the 1920's were no longer needed.³¹

²⁹ Ibid. and G. Zaidel and M. Tsvibak, Klassovyi vrag na istoricheskom fronte: Tarle i Platonov i ikh shkoly, (Moscow, 1931).

³⁰ Alexander Vucinich, The Soviet Academy of Sciences, (Stanford, 1956), Chapter II.

³¹ Schapiro, op. cit., p. 470.

The journal of Pokrovsky's Marxist Historians survived in name alone; its research had adapted itself to the new demands of the State. In the summer of 1941 Istorik Marksist merged with the Academy of Sciences' publication Istoricheskii zhurnal (formerly Bor'ba klassov) and eventually, in 1945, was reorganized into Voprosy istorii, today's leading Soviet historical journal.³²

³²Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia, XIX, p. 4.

Technical and Methodological Problems

How did the party historians carry on their research on the Revolution of 1905? What technical and methodological problems did they face? Who were some of the individual party historians studying the Revolution of 1905?

Istpart, as has been described above, was subdivided into regional offices, where party historians worked in small groups compiling and analyzing histories of their part of the country. Their task seemed simple: to compile all source materials in their localities so that they could add to the knowledge of regional party history, and to treat these sources in a scientific way. But to carry out such a task in the early 1920's presented problems of the most frustrating nature.

In April 1923, when the All-Russian Congress of Istpart Workers took place in Moscow, the reports of the representatives of the 26 Istpart Bureaux hardly presented an encouraging picture.³³ All sorts of obstacles had conspired against the accomplishment of Istpart work.

A most common complaint by delegates was the lack of funds to organize and carry on research. In the case of the Vitebsk Bureau, for instance, the creditors were already heard knocking on the office door.³⁴ In some localities there were conflicts with the provincial Party Committee, who very often felt it could not spare good workers for a local history project. At best, two or three people would

³³ Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 4, 1923, p. 346 ff.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 351.

comprise the entire staff: the chairman, a secretary and an assistant. It goes without saying that the calibre of these people varied and that only there where trained, dedicated historians held the chairmanship was valuable work forthcoming.

The major difficulties connected with the technical side of the work were the consequences of wartime conditions. Because of the numerous changes in some of the local government administrations during the Civil War, and the generally unsettled conditions thereafter, many local archives had become scattered or completely lost.³⁵ The paper shortage had become so critical that parts of one local archive had been requisitioned for the manufacture of new paper.³⁶ In general, inventories of existing archives were lacking and money was not available to set to work.

In addition to these physical and technical problems, the party historians of the early 1920's also suffered from methodological weaknesses in their compilations of local and national histories.

In an attempt to amass the most complete collection of primary source materials for the study of the revolutionary movement in Russia, the local bureaux of Istpart were asked to carry on interviews with individuals who had participated in the Social Democratic movement. For this purpose "memoir evenings" were to be held so that old revolutionaries could speak about their personal experiences in the presence of party historians. Apparently these evenings were not at first an unqualified success.³⁷

³⁵Ibid., p. 349.

³⁶Ibid., p. 351.

³⁷Ibid.

For those "old comrades" who preferred to see their recollections published, Istpart made it amply clear that it would like nothing better than to receive detailed memoir material from anyone who cared to contribute:

The pages of our journal are at their disposal. The recollections of revolutionary personalities are a necessary and important element in the study of history; this is clear to everyone. It is also clear that it is necessary to hurry with these recollections, for merciless death inexorably reaps its harvest.³⁸

It is evident from this approach to the writing of party history that the importance of facts, no matter how minute, and the actions and thoughts of personalities, was greatly emphasized. This does not mean that historical materialism was to be ignored. On the contrary, it was to be embellished by the lively use of facts, so that party histories could be understood and enjoyed by people in all stages of literacy. More important, the lavish use of details and the presence of large numbers of personalities in the pages of Soviet historical studies made the Marxist laws of history more meaningful and strengthened the basic concepts of historical materialism.

Unfortunately, the general results obtained by provincial Istpart groups during its early years were quite disappointing. V. I. Nevsky, in a survey of provincial Istpart literature, complained about both the quantity and the quality of the work published. "Indeed, several hundred books of historical content for this year [1923] is very little for the study of such a grandiose movement as the Russian revolutionary movement...."³⁹

³⁸Krasnaia letopis' No. 1, 1922, p. 7.

³⁹Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 4, 1923, p. 286.

Nevsky complained about the shallow treatment of the subject-matter. The collections of essays issued by many of the local bureaux presented either petty and insignificant memoir material or encompassed "such large periods of time that they present a simple and uninteresting list of well-known events."⁴⁰ Furthermore, he said, many essays were neither well documented nor did they offer sufficient clarification "so that even valuable articles lose all significance and may even give an incorrect presentation."⁴¹

Comrade Nevsky was particularly distressed to see a great deal of "short and schematic" articles which lacked proper synthesizing and resulted in the writing of chronicles rather than histories -- a complaint frequently voiced by other reviewers during the 1920's.

What was particularly to be desired was more original research. In other words, the Marxist treatment of new sources was needed. It will be remembered that much tsarist archival material had become available for study only very recently and presented fresh sources for the writing of party history. Of immense value to the study of the 1905 Revolution were the Okhrana and police files, but to the untrained party historian they offered the temptation merely to copy and chronicle the names, professions and prison sentences of innumerable revolutionaries whose place in history or further fate could never be known.

The lamentations of the leading party historians of the early 1920's leave the impression that Istpart had achieved nothing

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 288.

⁴¹Ibid.

but a vast cultural muddle caused by a lack of organizational ties, a lack of funds and an absence of talent. One might well have said that the history of the nation was in the hands of amateurs who could have served the party better in some other capacity. Actually, the situation did improve in the years that followed. By 1927, when Istpart held its IV Congress, the delegates expressed great pride in the change their organization had undergone.⁴²

Probably a major reason why the provinces offered such a sad spectacle during the first years of party historiography was the fact that the better-trained and more influential party historians were working in the capitals, where, with better technical and administrative support, significant progress could be made. It must not be forgotten, however, that historians as well as everyone else living in Moscow and Petrograd during the period of War Communism and immediately thereafter, also suffered many physical hardships. Libraries and archives were unheated, a factor which together with malnutrition and sickness, took the lives of a number of historians.⁴³

Contributing to the central organs of Soviet history -- Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, Krasnaia letopis', Krasnyi arkhiv, and Istorik Marksist -- were a group of well known personalities. Those among them who specialized in the history of 1905 were, if not trained historians, then certainly capable and loyal people. Many of them had been members of the revolutionary organizations since the 1880's or 1890's and had become Bolsheviks at the II Congress of the RSDLP. A number of them had contributed to the "old Iskra" and later, in 1905,

⁴²Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 1, 1927, p. 259.

⁴³Shteppa, op. cit., Chapter I.

had helped Lenin to bring out Vpered, Proletarii, and Bor'ba.⁴⁴ Their names were linked with some of the important events in party history and the history of the Revolution of 1905: E. Iaroslavsky agitated among the tsarist troops during the First Russian Revolution and contributed to Vpered; M. I. Vasil'ev-Iuzhin and S. I. Chernomordik participated in the Moscow party organizations and the uprising of December 1905; D. F. Sverchkov was a member of the Executive Committee of the St. Petersburg Soviet; S. I. Mitskevich was an agitator, along with Pokrovsky and Rozhkov, as a member of the "Literary-lecturers Group of the Moscow Committee of the RSDLP;" F. N. Samoilov participated in the Soviet of Workers' Deputies of Ivanovo-Voznesensk and became the most authoritative historian of that organization; M. S. Ol'minsky, one of the chief editors of Proletarskaia revoliutsiia during the 1920's had contributed to every Bolshevik party organ from Vpered to Pravda; and M. N. Liadov, whose career as a party historian dates back to 1906 continued in that profession throughout the 1920's.

All of them had had experience writing for the party press at one time or another; now they were enlisted to write history. Recollecting the events that had taken place more than twenty years earlier, Maria Essen exclaimed: "Why, in those days we thought the last thing expected of us was to be historians!"⁴⁵ At the time of the October General Strike of 1905 she was a party organizer; in the 1920's

⁴⁴G. K. Derman, (ed.), Pervaia Russkaia Revoliutsiia; ukazatel' literatury, (Moscow, 1930), pp. 653 ff.

⁴⁵M. M. Essen, "V 1905 godu," Krasnaia letopis', No. 1, 1926, p. 100.

she was a well known party historian. It may come as somewhat of a surprise, therefore, that their work is not necessarily journalistic in quality. Indeed, a great number of articles come properly attired with adequate documentation as well as evidences of a Marxist-Leninist foundation. The reviewers of party publications too, are often harshly critical of anyone whose ideological and methodological standards have fallen too low.

The picture of 1905 that emerges from the writings of these party historians is one filled with the drama of revolutionary upheaval, yet is still tempered with a sense of honesty toward facts based on documentary evidence. Especially when compared with the party histories of later years, these early works make for exciting reading and present valuable information.

Soviet Sources for the Study of the Revolution of 1905

What sources did the party historians of the 1920's have available for their study of the 1905 Revolution? Heading the list of primary sources was the first edition of Lenin's Collected Works, with additional documents appearing in the special volumes of the Leninskii sbornik. In 1926, Volume V of this collection came out and provided historians with previously unpublished material portraying Lenin in 1905.

Of particular value to Soviet historians concerned with the First Revolution were Lenin's essays and articles written during the years 1905-1907⁴⁶ in which he reported and analyzed the major events of the revolution, as well as his writings on the agrarian program and his theoretical essays of the period of 1905. Most valuable among the latter was the polemic Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution.

Many of Lenin's articles had originally appeared in the illegal underground press and Soviet historians made ample use of both the Bolshevik and the non-Bolshevik party newspapers: Lenin's Vpered and

⁴⁶ Ironically, volume VI of Lenin's Collected Works, in which are found his articles written in 1905-6, and Trotsky's history of the First Russian Revolution, 1905, were both published the same year -- 1922. Historians used Trotsky's work as a standard reference during the first part of the 1920's, and thereafter as a source for repudiating the theory of the "permanent revolution."

Proletarii; the Menshevik party organ Iskra, as well as their Sotsial-demokrat and Nachalo; the Bund's Poslednye Izvestiia; the Socialist Revolutionaries' Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia; and Osvobozhdeniia, the organ of the Liberals. "These sources shed light on party tactics," said V. I. Nevsky, for here were found policy statements of Lenin's principal opponents -- Axelrod, Martov, Dan, Martynov, Trotsky and Parvus.⁴⁷

But the works of Lenin had a value for Soviet historians that went beyond its factual and ideological content, for in his writings they found an inspiration and a model for historiographical methodology. Party historians could hardly call Lenin a historian in the ordinary sense of the term: "How can one speak of Lenin as a historian if he has not written a single historical work?" asked the party historian G. Lelevich.⁴⁸ Admittedly, he was the builder of Russian and world revolution, he was an economist, a sociologist, a philosopher, a journalist, even a literary critic, when one considers his analysis of the works of Tolstoy -- but was he also a historian? Lelevich answers this elaborately rhetorical question with an emphatic "yes, and more." Lenin, he tells us, was a historian because

[his] amazing, all-encompassing mind....could not help but concern itself in its scientific work with that important field of social science which is called history.⁴⁹

⁴⁷V. I. Nevskii, Sovety i vooruzhennoe vosstanie v 1905 godu, (Moscow; Izdatel'stvo vsesoiuznogo obshchestva politkatorzhan i ssyl'no-poselentsev, 1931), p. 275.

⁴⁸G. Lelevich, "Lenin, kak istorik," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 4, 1924, p. 5.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 5.

Lenin was a historian because he was the "best Marxist of our times," and "Marxism is historicism."⁵⁰ It remained only for the author of the article to show how masterfully Lenin used Marxist historicism -- or historical materialism -- as the basis for his political thoughts in order for him to declare: "Vladimir Il'ich not only 'made history,' but also 'wrote it.'"⁵¹

Lelevich was careful to point out, however, that although Lenin always based himself solidly on the materialist concept of history and never forgot that "at the basis of the struggle lie the social-economic relations," he did not thereby disregard the secondary factors. He never "mechanized" history by depriving it of its actors: "The people themselves make their history," he is quoted to have said, although "under conditions not created by them."⁵²

In the subsequent examination of the Soviet treatment of the Revolution of 1905, we shall have occasion to see in greater detail how Lenin's followers faced the problem of human action in a revolutionary situation. The emphasis Lelevich placed on Lenin's ability to humanize historical events is characteristic of the general apprehension voiced by many Soviet historians lest they be accused of too much "economic determinism" of too rigid a treatment of historical problems.⁵³

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 5-6.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 8

⁵²Ibid., p. 19.

⁵³See for instance, M. N. Pokrovsky, "The Tasks of the Society of Marxist Historians," in F. Stern, (ed.), The Varieties of History, (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Co., 1964), p. 334.

In spite of their ardent disclosures concerning Lenin's scholarly treatment of history, the party historians themselves concluded that it was his politics and political theories, rather than the historical premises he used, that formed the substance of Lenin's manifold talents. It was the party struggle which dominated the life and writings of Lenin and which he himself singled out as the principal subject of historical research for those who wanted to understand the practical tasks of their times.⁵⁴ With the written legacy of Lenin as their principal source, Soviet theoretical works on 1905 were in essence re-creations of Lenin's own ideological struggles within the Social Democratic Party. His attempts in 1905 to convince his fellow-revolutionaries of the correctness of his newly formulated theories became a dominant theme in Soviet historical research.

Indeed, Lenin was not a historian in the ordinary sense of the word. Rather, he himself was the first true party historian whose works became an inspiration to all his followers.

Among the more mundane sources used by the party historians of the 1920's were the tsarist archives. Files from both the central and provincial police departments and the Okhrana were made available to historians. In addition, there were the files from the Ministry of Finance, which contained the reports of the factory inspectors submitted during 1905. The records from civilian and military courts were of great value in recreating the subversive activities of the illegal

⁵⁴ Lelevich, *op. cit.*, p. 7

parties. And finally, there were the numerous collections of proclamations, leaflets and appeals issued by the various political organizations active in 1905.

Many valuable documents and materials discovered in these archives during the 1920's were published for the first time in the party history journals along with materials from personal archives and the memoirs of old revolutionaries.

By the mid-1920's quite a voluminous literature already existed on party history in general, as well as a sizeable quantity of monographs, much of which included the period of the 1905 Revolution. The first volume of the History of the VKP(b), edited by E. Iaroslavsky in 1926, mentions the following works as suitable textbooks for party schools: Zinoviev's Istoriia RKP(b), Moscow Petrograd, 1923); M. N. Liadov's Kak nachala skladyvat'sia RKP(b), which was written "underground" and republished in 1924; "the voluminous but still unfinished work of comrade V. Nevsky;"⁵⁵ K. I. Shelavin's Rabochii klass i ego partiia:

⁵⁵The work referred to is probably V. I. Nevsky's Ocherki po istorii RKP(b) of which the first volume appeared in 1925. Its publication evoked so much adverse criticism that it is surprising to find it mentioned as an accredited reference work. Three prominent party historians, Ol'minsky, Baturin and Liadov, strongly cautioned readers against using this book for a study of the history of the Party and emphatically stated that Istpart was opposed to the use of Nevsky's book in party schools. Aside from factual errors, which seemed so numerous to the critics that they were unable to list them all, Nevsky was accused of lacking a correct understanding of the Marxist method of history, of placing too much importance on the roles of individuals in the formation of Social Democratic organizations in the 1880's and 1890's, of analyzing incorrectly the rise of social classes in Russia and of misunderstanding the class divisions within the peasantry, who,

Istoriia RKP(b), (Petrograd, 1923); short works by Bubnov and Kamenev, as well as other assorted monographs on the history of the party. Among documentary anthologies are listed the seven volumes of Revoliutsiia i RKP(b) v materialakh i dokumentakh, (Moscow, 1924) and the 4-volume Khrestomatiia po Leninizmu, edited by N. Karpov and M. Flidner, as well as "the very detailed anthology on Leninism, compiled by comrade Astrov and edited by L. B. Kamenev."⁵⁶

Probably the most monumental work to deal specifically with the Revolution of 1905-1907 is the collection of monographs, documents, and materials entitled 1905: Istoriia revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v otdel'nykh ocherkakh,⁵⁷ published in honor of the 20th anniversary of the revolution under the general editorship of M. N. Pokrovsky. Although 1905 does not focus all its attention on the history of the party, it includes in its many historical essays every aspect of the party struggle past and present. One of the primary purposes for its

in addition, were not given due credit for their revolutionary potentialities.

N. Baturin, "Po povodu knigi tov. V. I. Nevskogo (Ocherki po istorii RKP(b))," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, Nos. 8-9, 1924, pp. 149-163, to which is added a letter from M. Liadov to M. Ol'minsky in connection with the book by Nevsky; N. Baturin, "Na svezhuu vodu (Kritika kriticheskoi antikritiki V. I. Nevskogo); po povodu knigi V. I. Nevskogo "Ocherki po istorii RKP(b)," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 12, 1925, pp. 225-242; M. Ol'minskii, "V. Nevskii, Ocherki po istorii RKP, chast' I," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 5, 1924, pp. 222-227. See also N. Baturin, "V. Nevskii, Istoriia RKP(b), Kratkii ocherk," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 1, 1926. For a short but forceful defense by Nevsky, see the Introduction to the second edition of his Istoriia RKP(b), Kratkii ocherk, (Leningrad, 1926).

⁵⁶E. Iaroslavskii (ed.), Istoriia VKP(b), vol. I, (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosundarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1926), p. 2.

⁵⁷M. N. Pokrovskii (ed.), 1905: Istoriia revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v otdel'nykh ocherkakh, (3 volso; Moscow-Leningrad: Gos. izs., 1925-1927). (Kromissiia TsIK SSSR po organizatsii prazdnovaniia 20-letii revoliutsii 1905 g. i Istpart TsK RKP(b)).

publication, according to the editor, was that it should take the place of the most prominent and through Menshevik work on the revolutionary movement of the turn of the century -- Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Rossii v nachale XX veka, edited by Martov, Maslov and Potresov. Almost in the nature of a challenge, the correct initial note was sounded with the opening chapter of 1905 -- a reprint of Lenin's "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution."

A look at the Table of Contents of 1905 shows how all-embracing this work was, both factually and ideologically. Aside from several volumes of materials and documents, there appeared 4 volumes of monographs: Background to the Revolution, From January to October, From October to December, and a separate volume for E. Iaroslavsky's Armed Uprising.

Pokrovsky himself wrote two sections: "The Japanese War" and "Peace and Reaction" -- the only articles of the collection which deal primarily with foreign affairs. For the rest, internal events -- the economic situation and the mass movement -- are of major interest.

The historians Kirzhnits, Rafes, and Dimanshtein compiled, edited and described the materials dealing with the Jewish workers' movement and its role in the 1905 Revolution. Nearly a book in itself, this monograph examined the various Jewish political parties which existed during the years before 1905 and discusses in detail the relations of the Bund with the RSDLP.

The section on the "Economic Position of Russia on the Eve of the Revolution" is divided into two parts: "Agriculture," by

A. Gaister, and "Industry," by M. Vanag, who also wrote the monograph "January 9."⁵⁸

The section entitled "The Mass Movement on the Eve of the Revolution of 1905" contains a thorough analysis of the peasant movement by S. Dubrovsky⁵⁹ and B. Grave, as well as Anna Pankratova's "Working Class and Workers Movement on the Eve of the Revolution of 1905." With the publication of this monograph, Anna Pankratova made her scholarly debut. One of the few "pupils" of Pokrovsky to survive the purge directed against his "school," (and also one of Pokrovsky's principal accusers), she continued to rise to fame and became one of the leading party historians of the Stalin and Post-Stalin years.⁶⁰

The second volume of 1905 analyzes the events of the revolutionary year itself and again combines economics, the mass movement and the party struggle before and during 1905. The latter topic is

⁵⁸M. Vanag "disappeared" during the purges of the 1930's along with other historians associated with Pokrovsky after having been officially criticized for his plans for a textbook that was to be entitled The Peoples of the USSR. Shteppa, op. cit., pp. 50, 107, and 119.

⁵⁹A member of the Party and Director of the Agrarian Institute under the Communist Academy, Dubrovsky became a central figure in the discussions concerning historical formations in the late 1920's. His book, On the Question of the Essence of the "Asiatic" Mode of Production supported the Stalinist point of view. Ibid., p. 73.

⁶⁰In 1926, however, a reviewer in Krasnaia letopis' singled out the Dubrovsky work as being "a research article in the fullest sense of the word," and contrasted it with Pankratova's effort, which he felt was comparatively less thorough. Krasnaia letopis', No. 2, 1926, p. 187.

expounded by V. Astrov, who, in less than fifty pages gives a complete history of the Party's conflicts with its rivals -- from Populism through Menshevism -- and the effect this political war had on local party organizations in Russia. The extensive account of the "Potemkin" mutiny and the revolutionary situation in Odessa which appears in this collection is one of the last published works of the popular and respected Soviet historian N. Avdeev who died in 1926.

Of particular interest in the third volume is the article on the Soviets by V. I. Nevsky which was republished, with minor changes, in 1931 as the first 86 pages of his Sovety i vooruzhennae vosstanie v 1905 godu.

A separate volume on armed uprising by E. Iaroslavsky concludes this impressive collective history of 1905.

There is no doubt that this collection of materials, documents and analytical monographs is the most representative example of Soviet historiography of 1905 to be published in the 1920's. It is, indeed, a "period piece" that is both informative and revealing.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL PROBLEMS OF 1905

Formulation of the Problems

During the 1920's, and especially during the latter part of that decade, the leaders of the Soviet Union were confronted with theoretical problems that concerned both the national revolutionary movement of the recent past and the international revolutionary movement of their own day. At home, they had to justify the changes that had taken place during 1917 and thereafter -- the swift growing over from the "dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" of February 1917 to the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in October. In the Communist International, they had to provide a guide-line for countries that still had before them the prospect of a bourgeois-democratic or socialist revolution.

Thus, of all the problems concerned with the mechanics of revolution, it was principally the one involving the transition from one type of revolutionary situation to the next in Russia and abroad, that occupied party leaders and historians. And it was in Lenin's writings on 1905 that they found the theoretical foundations for their needs. Indeed, in the course of resolving the problems of revolutionary transition they created a continuity

between Russia's revolutionary past and Soviet leadership in the revolutions that were yet to come.

In order to understand the process of the transition of one revolutionary stage into another in correct Bolshevik terms, Soviet historians had to take their readers back not only to the Leninist formulation of the political theories of 1905, but to the Marxist source itself.

Intertwined with the search for a correct answer to the problem of transition was the theme of the continuing "party struggle" which indeed supported much of the structure of Soviet research on 1905. Traditionally, the history of the Bolsheviks was shown to have been from its very beginning the history of their struggle against one "opportunist" or "adventurist" group after another. As soon as one ideological dragon was slain, a new one stood ready to confront Lenin and his brave men. In 1928, S. I. Gusev, a well-known agitator and party organizer in 1905, and now a leading party historian, summed up the course of the party struggle at a meeting of the Council of Istpart:

We must examine the history of the party ... as a protracted struggle for the existence of the party on the part of the Bolsheviks in which we threw out from our party the Legal Marxists as well as the Economists, the Rabochedelists, the Mensheviks, the Liquidators of the Right and of the Left (the Bogdanoyites, Otzovists, Ultimatists) and, finally, the Trotskyites.¹

¹Proletarskaia revoliutsia, No. 4, 1928, p. 221. The disagreements which existed between the Bolsheviks and the competing revolutionary parties during the years preceding 1905 and those following it were certainly not to be minimized. They touched upon problems of a very fundamental nature which ultimately left no room for united action and very little space even for temporary periods of

The strong bonds with which party historians were compelled to tie the past to the present, especially during the second half of the 1920's, also determined their choice of reasearch materials and their analysis of historical evidence. In order to discredit the enemies which were accused of undermining the Soviet state and society, party historians could easily portray them as the direct descendents of the traitors of the past (or even the very same people) whose views were most dramatically revealed in connection with the Revolution of 1905. Here, ready for their instant use, were not only the precedents of past Bolshevik encounters with "treachery," but Lenin's own inexhaustible mine of slogans, advice, recriminations and interpretations -- many of them also dating back to 1905.

The effects of the political struggle for Soviet leadership are found sprinkled throughout the writings of the party historians. By the late 1920's, when the struggle for power had passed its stage of turbulent uncertainty, party historians took every opportunity to

co-existence. The history of the entire war among the pre-Revolutionary opposition parties and factions -- the differences in outlook, on tactics and political theory, on the part of the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, Trotskyites, Socialist Revolutionaries, and Liberals -- has been quite thoroughly investigated and portrayed by Western historians of the Russian revolutionary movement and will not be repeated here. It must be emphasized that the present historiographical study deals not with the party struggle past or present wie es eigentlich gewesen, but with Soviet interpretations of the 1905 Revolution in which the party struggle was only one of several recurring themes.

deride concurrently the ideas of Lenin's political rivals in 1905 and those of Stalin's more recent enemies. In the case of Trotsky, party historians who dealt with problems of 1905 were able to show the consistency of his political errors and the fundamental weaknesses of his character.

It must be noted, however, that before 1926 party historians limited themselves to the party struggle of the past and left the quarrels of the day out of their analyses.² It was only when the party struggle took an unmistakable turn toward a predictable outcome that party historians ran to the support of the winners and helped to demolish the losers of the struggle in the party press. This was also the time when the writings of their less careful colleagues were "torn to shreds" and linked with the theories of the party leaders facing political defeat.³

²See, for instance, the three articles by V. Bystriansky which appeared in Krasnaia letopis' in 1925: "Lenin i sovety v pervoi russkoi revoliutsii," Krasnaia letopis' No. 2, 1925; "Lenin i krest'ianstvo v pervoi revoliutsii," Krasnaia letopis', No. 3, 1925; "Lenin kak teoretik vooruzhennogo vosstania v pervoi russkoi burzhuaznoi revoliutsii 1905-1907 gg.," Krasnaia letopis', No. 4, 1925.

³One example is Dmitri Sverchkov's popular memoir Na Zare Revoliutsii, (1922). In 1930, the author was called "one of the closest champions" of Trotsky. Sverchkov's sin seemed to consist of the fact that he had asserted "that the theory of the Permanent Revolution, which was fervently advocated by Trotsky, had not only no influence in the Party, but was shared by hardly anyone." (E. Iaroslavskii (ed.), Istoriia VKP(b) (Moscow-Leningrad: Gos. izd., 1930), II, p. 252.) To minimize the harmful influence of Trotsky's theory, to say that Trotsky and Parvus were the sole supporters of an unpopular idea, and to think that there was no "class basis" to support Trotskyism is really "to evade the social essence of Trotskyism." Along with Sverchkov, the authors of the Istoriia VKP(b) also indicted Rykov and Radek for belittling the theory of the Permanent Revolution. (Ibid.)

In 1925 the theoretical articles pertaining to 1905 and published in the leading party historical journals did not as yet reflect the "deviationist" ideologies of Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, or others whose future was not completely certain. On the other hand, there was no consistent policy of silence: the writings of Zinoviev, for instance, were used in spite of the power struggle taking place in 1925, in which he was a central figure and which involved the entire Leningrad party organization.⁴ By the end of 1926, however, the political and literary climate had changed and the anti-Trotsky campaign became gradually incorporated into the historiography of 1905.⁵

Most theoretical writings which appeared in the party historical journals of the 1920's on the Revolution of 1905 presented the Bolshevik views on the subject in the form of exegeses of Lenin's articles and brochures dealing with the First Russian Revolution. Rival interpretations were in most cases contrasted directly with

⁴See Leonard Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (New York: Random House, 1959), p. 290, and Isaac Deutscher, The Prophet Unarmed. Trotsky: 1921-1929, (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 240-261 for details on the power struggle between the Moscow and Leningrad Party leaders in 1925. See also A. I. Mitrofanov, "From the History of the Party's Struggle Against the 'New Opposition' After the 14th Party Congress, " Voprosy istorii KPSS, No. 12, 1965, pp. 97-107.

⁵N. Lentsner, in his analysis of Trotsky's ideas in 1904, links him with Economists and Mensheviks of the past, and is so outspoken in his condemnation that he unmistakably reflects official anti-Trotskyism. (Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 12(59), 1926.)

Lenin's axiomatically accepted ideas and shown in comparison to have been very inadequate if not completely reactionary.⁶

A link between the 1920's and 1905 was thus maintained in the theoretical field -- in the search by party historians for the correct interpretation of revolutionary transition -- as well as in the continuing party struggle, and both these elements became inseparable in the historical writings of the 1920's. Not only were the political theories which were developed by Lenin during 1905 colored with the bias of the party struggle of the late 1920's, but many of these same theories were made to serve the needs of the present.

Disentangled, there were actually three interrelated elements in the historiography of the political theories of 1905: 1) the political theories of 1905 themselves; 2) the relationship of these theories to the current international situation; 3) the continuing party struggle, which drew attention to alternative theories. The second point, as we shall see, is no more than an extension of the first, although the party historians treated it as a separate topic, while elements of the party struggle, past and present, could be found throughout.

⁶Textbooks such as Iaroslavsky's Istoriia VKP(b) and V. Nevsky's Istoriia RKP, Kratkii ocherk (Leningrad: "Priboi," 1926) which did treat Menshevik and other non-Bolshevik ideologies under separate headings, did so in the context of the "correct" Bolshevik interpretations. See also F. A. Anderson et al., Nashi protivniki: Sbornik materialov i dokumentov (Moscow: Kom. un-t im. Ia. M. Sverdlova, 1928), I, which deals with Legal Marxism, Economism, Menshevism, Makhaevism, and Socialist Revolutionary political theories.

An investigation by party historians of the political theories of 1905 alone usually concerned the following problems:

- 1) the correct understanding of the character of the revolution of 1905 and its active forces;
- 2) the importance of the leading role of the proletariat;
- 3) the nature of the peasant movement;
- 4) the establishment of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry; all of which, in turn, prepared the ground for an analysis of
- 5) the problem of the growing over of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution.

We can readily see that this topical division of the political theories of 1905 also encompassed a chronological progression. All the individual themes in the Leninist plan for revolution in 1905 were harnessed to create a forward movement toward socialism. Furthermore, Lenin's schematization of revolutionary progression proved to be sufficiently flexible in the hands of the party historians so that they were able to help Soviet leaders in adapting the original theories of 1905 to changing times.

The Character and Driving Forces of the Revolution of 1905

In the light of the bitter disagreements that characterized the relations between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks throughout the years, it is refreshing to note the admission by party historians that both factions of the Social Democratic Party did agree on one thing: the forthcoming revolution was to be a bourgeois revolution. Beyond this point however, Soviet historians have been unable to find any other area of agreement in the theories, tactics and activities of the two groups. Even in a discussion concerning the simple definition of the character of the revolution, party historians only grudgingly concede that any similarity existed in the Bolshevik and Menshevik formulations. Quite often they leave the reader with the impression that it was Lenin alone who correctly conceived the entire characterization of the revolution while the Mensheviks were compelled to bow to his good sense. It was "the clarity and definiteness with which Lenin pointed out the bourgeois character of the revolution... which did not call forth any disagreement among the Social Democrats..."⁷

Quotations from Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution are used repeatedly by Soviet historians to dramatize Lenin's uncompromising insistence that the first task of Social Democrats was to liquidate the remnants of Russian serfdom and the social relationships it had engendered in order to clear the road for capitalism. "The working class suffered not so much from capitalism as from the lack of capitalist development,"⁸ historians were fond of

⁷ Ieroslavskii, op. cit., p. 173.

⁸ Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 12, 1930, p. 7, quoting Lenin, Sochineniia, Vol. VIII, p. 57.

quoting, without indicating that this was a principle generally accepted by all Social Democrats. Even when agreement by all the Social Democrats concerning the bourgeois character of the revolution was clearly stated,⁹ there was little danger that the reader would be tempted to stop to rejoice upon hearing this good news, for he was told almost in the same breath that this small area of ideological agreement was empty of substance.

The Revolution of 1905, in its socio-economic nature was bourgeois, but the concept of bourgeois revolution by itself, taken separately, is too general and still does not give the whole picture of the entire movement.¹⁰

In reality, we are told, the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks completely disagreed on the way in which -- and particularly, by whom -- the remnants of Russian feudalism were to be destroyed: Which classes in Russian society were to lead in the coming upheaval and which ones were to serve in the subordinate position of allies.

The plans that were made by the two factions of the Social Democratic Party to mobilize the Russian population for the coming struggle are well known to students of the Russian revolutionary movement. The Marxist historian Pokrovsky neatly summed up both the character of the revolution and its class relationship:

⁹The authors of the officially approved party history textbook of the late 1920's, Istoriia VKP(b), edited by E. Iaroslavsky, do elaborate on the literal acceptance by all the Social Democrats of the bourgeois character of the revolution. They state rather courageously, for the times, that "even the 'permanentists' (Trotsky and Parvus) formally acknowledged that Russia would have to experience the bourgeois revolution." (vol. II, p. 157). In the pages that follow, this statement is modified by further analysis. The SR's, on the other hand, are shown to have consistently denied the bourgeois character of the revolution, (Ibid.).

¹⁰Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 12, 1930, p. 7.

The term "bourgeois revolution" may mean two different things: it may either mean a revolution which establishes conditions necessary to the existence of the bourgeois or capitalist order, or it may mean a revolution where the leadership belongs to the bourgeoisie. It was in the first of these meanings that the term was applied to the Revolution of 1905-7 by us, Bolsheviks. The Mensheviks interpreted it in the second way; this is particularly true of Plekhanov, who insisted that the working-class must give all support to the bourgeoisie, by whom he believed "the Revolution was being carried out."¹¹

In other words, the bourgeois revolution was to promote the capitalist development of Russia, involving the participation of all revolutionary forces, but of these only the proletariat was to possess hegemony.

Thus, the differences over the leadership of the coming revolution far outweighed any agreement concerning the proper place of the revolution in the Marxist scheme of history. Soviet historians give the Mensheviks of the early 20th century no credit for allowing the proletariat to have any significant role whatsoever in the forthcoming revolution: a bourgeois revolution, the Mensheviks had said, must be led by the liberal bourgeoisie, who would also enjoy all the benefits of such an upheaval.¹² The fact that the Mensheviks aspired to represent the workers while planning to restrain themselves in a revolution they could not consider their own, was interpreted by the Soviet party historians as a hypocritical attempt to betray the proletariat to the Liberals. Their excuse for this shameful deed, we are told by the

¹¹M. N. Pokovsky, Brief History of Russia, trans. D. S. Mirsky (London: Martin Lawrence, Ltd., 1933), II, p. 17.

¹²See S. H. Baron, "Plekhanov and the Revolution of 1905," Essays in Russian and Soviet History, ed. by J. S. Curtiss (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), on the fact that the Mensheviks did envisage a leading role for the workers.

authors of the History of the VKP(b), was that of maintaining proletarian class independence in a bourgeois struggle -- a tactic which would have had noble overtones in a Leninist context.

...under the pretext of preserving the class independence of the proletariat and the unwillingness to tie their hands in the struggle with the inconsistent bourgeois democracy, the Mensheviks in fact introduced surreptitiously the vulgar liberal idea of removing the proletariat from active participation in the bourgeois revolution and of the refusal to fight for the hegemony in it.¹³

It is primarily the anger with which Soviet historians view the intentions of the Mensheviks which characterizes their interpretations of Menshevik ideology. In substance, the Menshevik theoreticians -- especially Plekhanov -- were indeed doctrinaire in their emphatic renunciation of a consistent leadership in a bourgeois revolution¹⁴ and party historians take great pains (or rather, pleasure) in deriding the Mensheviks' "inability to take into account the concrete peculiarities of the circumstances..."¹⁵

¹³Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 181.

¹⁴See Baron. op. cit., p. 136: "Plekhanov failed to notice the inconsistency of his system, which required a class-conscious proletariat to play the decisive role in a revolution which would deliver power to the bourgeoisie."

¹⁵Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 12, 1930, p. 12. It is interesting to note that the indignation consistently expressed by Soviet historians toward Menshevik beliefs and behavior before and during 1905 was not wholeheartedly reflected in their writings on Plekhanov. Although it was he who had defined most clearly the "rightist" Menshevik viewpoint toward the coming revolution, Soviet historians, in many cases, continued to speak of him with respect. He was given credit for his successful attacks on Populism; he was still considered the leading Marxist theoretician of the 1880's, and he was accepted as an outstanding historian. On occasion, quotations from his writings were even used as theoretical ammunition in the party struggle of the 1920's. (See, N. Lentsner's "Trotskizm nakanune pervoi revoliutsii," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 12, 1926, pp. 14-69.) In the profusion of hate, a certain amount of warmth is occasionally noted toward the early leaders of Russian Marxism -- the founders of the Liberation of Labor Group --

Although there was no longer a Menshevik party in the Soviet Union after 1921, its mistakes in revolutionary theory were kept neatly on file; the Menshevik label could thus easily be pinned on any individual or any group that expressed ideas similar to the original "misinterpretation" of Communism. In many cases, the Soviet leaders were able to use virtually the same argumentation against the new Mensheviks of the 1920's that Lenin had drawn up in 1905.¹⁶

More than any other work, Soviet party historians use the text of Lenin's Two Tactics in elucidating the problems that faced the Bolsheviks during 1905, in defining the leading class forces in the bourgeois-democratic revolution and for seeking a prognosis for the future. With this well-known brochure as a basic source of inspiration

who later became identified with Menshevism. Even in 1930, when anti-Menshevik feelings were standard, the historian Pavel Gorin described rather nostalgically how painful it must have been for Lenin in 1903 to break off relations with Plekhanov and his other Social Democratic friends for political reasons. Understandably, Lenin is given credit for his strength of character in being able to subordinate his personal feelings for the sake of ideological purity. (Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 5, 1930, p. 12.) Understandably too, for the sake of the ideological purity of the party historians, the respect shown by them for Lenin's teacher does not prevent them from condemning his "mistaken" analysis of the political situation just before and during 1905. (Pod znamepem marsksizma, No. 5, 1928, pp. 137-162.) Thus, while the villainy of Trotsky was a constant characteristic of the man, Plekhanov's early years were treated favorably and even his later exasperating behavior caused one historian to call him not a "traitor" but a nachetnik -- a well-read, but uncritically-minded person. (Ibid.)

¹⁶See, for instance, Chapter IV of Istoriia VKP(b): "Lenin in his Struggle with the Parvus and Trotsky Evaluation of the Character and Motive Power of the Revolution," in which it is shown that Trotskyism is merely a variation of Menshevism and can be attacked as such. Trotsky, to be sure, is allocated an extreme left position in the "opportunist wing of Social Democracy, which was divided, according to the writers of the Istoriia, into "Right," "Centralist," and "Left" tendencies, headed by Plekhanov-Cherevanin, Dan-Martov, and Parvus-Trotsky, respectively. (p. 251.)

The class basis of Trotskyism was also shown as having been petty-bourgeois -- a class that is extremely radical during a revol-

and with Lenin's other writings on 1905 for substantiation, party historians showed how he had pointed out two probable directions which a bourgeois revolution in Russia was likely to take. It was either to be one that would be predominantly advantageous to the big bourgeoisie or it would be one that would bring greater benefits to the workers and peasants.

Historically, there were two prototypes to consider: the French Revolution of 1789-1793, and the German revolution of 1848-50. Lenin felt that the forthcoming revolution could take either road, but for the sake of a more favorable transition to socialism, he eagerly hoped that the Russians would follow the course taken by the French Revolution. A party historian paraphrased Lenin's description of the two revolutions in the following way:

The French type of revolution is characterized by a protracted revolutionary movement, a rising line in the revolutionary process, a maximum involvement of the masses, a sudden demolishing of outmoded institutions, the converting of feudal manure into fertilizer for the peasants' fields. The German way, on the other hand, which was an explosive revolutionary movement, handed over the leadership of the movement to the liberal bourgeoisie, came to an agreement with the old regime. The bourgeois revolution was carried on by reforms from above, it was dragged out for many decades, abandoning much that was unfinished, demanding great sacrifice from the workers and peasants.¹⁷

utionary upsurge, when it refuses to be bothered about "stages", "transitions," and stops," but that renounces revolution completely when a decline in the momentum takes place. Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 251.

¹⁷ Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 12, 1930, p. 7.

Although the French model was thus the preferred one, Lenin made it clear, and party historians emphasize it with pride, that the Russians were not merely to re-enact an 18th century revolution. There was no reason to imitate the Jacobins of 1793 when the Social Democrats of 1905 had their own, more suitable, program, slogans and tactical plans. But if the French model was not completely perfect, the German revolutionary path was to be avoided at all cost.

The most important difference between the French Revolution and Russia's first bourgeois revolution was the relative strength of the working class in these two countries. In France, where the revolution "took place at the dawn of industrial capitalist development," the workers were poorly organized and ideologically unprepared to take on the leadership of a great upheaval. It was rather the urban petty bourgeoisie that played the leading role, while the workers and peasants held the subordinate position of allies.

In Lenin's scheme of social history, the Russian liberal bourgeoisie -- chosen by the Mensheviks to lead the revolution -- was destined to come to an agreement with the tsarist government as soon as the latter would make the smallest constitutional concessions, in the same way the German liberals had reconciled themselves to reaction. And the Bolsheviks understood fully "the inconsistency and indecisiveness of the bourgeoisie in the revolution and its attempt to make a bargain with reaction."¹⁸

¹⁸ Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 178.

Thus, the coming revolution was not to be a repetition of the West European bourgeois revolutions of 1789, 1848 or even 1871. The Bolsheviks, it was emphasized, knew that the distinguishing feature of the coming revolution was the presence of a strong Russian working class. The workers, and not the cowardly bourgeoisie, would have "the role of the motive power of the revolution." In contrast to the defeated workers of the 18th and 19th century revolutions of Western Europe, the proletariat of Russia had enjoyed the benefits of a more highly developed capitalist environment and thereby had become the most class-conscious and best organized of all Russian social groups.

With these well-rounded qualifications for leadership, the workers were envisaged not only as the victors and principal beneficiaries of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, but, Soviet historians quickly point out, as the class that was to go farther than any other: in bringing the bourgeois revolution to a proper ending, it would be able to prepare for the transition to socialism.

Much as he was attracted by the French Revolution where a Jacobin dictatorship had swept away all the outmoded feudal institutions "in a truly plebeian manner," and much as he was impressed with the Paris Commune of 1871, Lenin was shown to have realized that the revolution which had just erupted in Russia would be a unique historical experience. And, it is repeated over and over again, the essence of this revolutionary experience lay in the driving force of the working class.

...The task of achieving the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois revolution is a completely new task. The Russian proletariat cannot base itself in this matter on the experiences of the proletariat of other countries because history has not known such an experience.¹⁹

Soviet historians were now faced with the task of reconciling a basic contradiction in Lenin's unique plan: the bourgeois nature of the revolution had to be maintained in order to provide the necessary political atmosphere in which to liquidate the past and prepare for the future; on the other hand, the bourgeoisie was not permitted to lead its own revolution, nor was it to be allowed to become the sole beneficiary of a successful struggle. Although it was not very difficult for Lenin, or for the party historians, to show that the bourgeoisie was unworthy of leadership under the particular socio-economic conditions of Russia in 1905, a more involved rationalization was required to deny it the complete realization of its goals and to allocate to the proletariat the benefits of a non-proletarian revolution.

To reap the complete harvest of a bourgeois revolution would ordinarily have implied a socialist seizure of power. This was the logical conclusion that Trotsky had reached. To participate jointly with the bourgeoisie in carrying out the revolution, but then to retire from the scene for the time being while capitalism was to flourish under a bourgeois administration, was Menshevism. Bolshevism had to be squeezed in somewhere between the two deviations by the party historians as it had been done by Lenin before them.²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 187.

²⁰ The authors of the Istoriia VKP(b) are careful to point out in this connection, that it is not correct to say that Bolshevism is always

One quotation from Lenin's writings conveniently avoids the finer points of the issue by simply stating: "The revolution ... expresses the interests not only of the working class, but also of the whole bourgeoisie."²¹ But, we are told:

...from this it does not follow that in the period of the bourgeois revolution the proletariat must remove itself from the role of hegemon in the revolution: the bourgeois revolution is that kind of a revolution which decisively and irrevocably sweeps away all remnants of feudalism and at the same time clears the path for socialism, and therefore a decisive bourgeois revolution is in the highest degree beneficial to the proletariat who must try to snatch away the leadership of the revolution from the hands of the bourgeoisie with the aim of carrying the revolution on to the end, to a completely democratic social structure.²²

Precisely with this in mind, [we are told elsewhere] Lenin said that the bourgeois revolution is by far more beneficial to the proletariat than to the bourgeoisie. Precisely therefore he insisted on the most active participation of the proletariat in the revolution.²³

In other words, whatever the bourgeoisie may gain from a bourgeois-democratic revolution, the proletariat will gain more. While many of Lenin's slogans, based on the Minimum Program of the RSDRP coincided with those proposed by the Liberals and Mensheviks, and while many of the results of such a revolution were expected to be identical with bourgeois goals, the "plebeian" manner in which all this was to be

"left" and Menshevism "right" of center, (Trotskyism, as was mentioned before was equated with Menshevism) -- "Bolshevism did and still does carry on not a 'right' and not a 'left' line, but a correct, revolutionary, proletarian line in politics." (p. 156.)

²¹Nevskii, op. cit., p. 263, quoting Lenin Sochinenia, Vol. VI, p. 329.

²²Ibid., p. 188.

²³Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 179.

carried out by the "Jacobins of the 20th century," and especially the more far-reaching benefits which a hegemony of the proletariat would assume, distinguished the Bolsheviks from both the Russian liberal camp and the French Jacobins. Indeed, it was the nature of the goals which the Russian workers were to promote during the bourgeois-democratic revolution which formed the true character of the Bolsheviks' image of 1905 -- it was the creation by the workers and their party of a political and social climate in which the transition to socialism could most efficiently be made.

For the Russian "Jacobins" [a party historian said] the bourgeois revolution was not the highest point, the limit of achievement, it was only a step, a transition to another, historically still more significant, socialist revolution.²⁴

To the Soviet party historian, in fact, the principal feature of the bourgeois revolution was its temporary condition. The distinguishing characteristics of the bourgeois revolution, its proletarian leadership, which was presented with such great emphasis by Soviet party historians was held up as the tool, the class instrument for the achievement of the real purpose of the revolution, the future socialist victory over capitalism.

In monographs and textbooks dealing with the theoretical problems of 1905, the Soviet party historians of the 1920's conscientiously reiterated Lenin's ideas on the transition from the rather troublesome but necessary bourgeois revolution to the far more rewarding victory of the socialist revolution. But, engulfed in the party struggle that

²⁴Ibid., p. 188.

was waged all around them, they were compelled to find the narrow path of correct historical interpretation in a veritable jungle of actual and potential ideological deviations. They had to demonstrate forcefully that unlike the Mensheviks, Lenin did advocate a speedy transition from the bourgeois to the socialist revolution. One of the basic sins of which the Mensheviks were accused was their insistence that there should be not only a sharp differentiation between the two revolutions, but that there should be an indefinitely long period of time separating them, during which the stage of bourgeois rule would eventually change to the stage of petty bourgeois democracy, before Russia could achieve socialism.²⁵ Yet, how great, really, was Lenin's hurry to leave the bourgeois revolution behind? Were he shown to be in too great a hurry to reach the socialist stage, his prognosis would be even closer to Trotsky's scheme of revolution than it already was beginning to appear. The accusation most commonly made against Trotsky's theory of the Permanent Revolution was that it confused and merged both the bourgeois and the socialist revolutions into a single stage thereby ignoring the basic differences between 1905 and 1917,²⁶ while Lenin had no intention of by-passing any historical formulation. A period of time was required during which the revolution would be "carried to the end" --- in other words, all the economic and social contradictions which had provoked a bourgeois revolution in the first place would be resolved. Specifically, this meant the realization of the Social Democratic Minimum Program: the establishment of a democratic government, the fulfillment of the needs of the peasants, the

²⁵Pod znamenenem marksizma, No. 5, 1928, p. 137.

²⁶Taroslavskii, op. cit., p. 252.

granting of civil and political rights to the entire population, the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, and, very providentially, the securing for the proletariat of complete freedom to organize its forces in preparation for the next, the proletarian revolution. "Until then," we are told, "it is impossible to consider the revolution led to the end."²⁷ But, how long was this to take?

Party historians did the best they could to find a reasonable estimation with the generous, though somewhat unwieldy legacy Lenin had left them. R. Amburskii, in an article on Lenin's political theories concerning 1905, tells us:

The bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia was not separated by a Chinese Wall from the proletarian revolution: the first day of the victory of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants also means the first day in its process of dying out -- the first day of the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.²⁸

After having scurried back and forth from one heresy to another and having condemned each one for its base ignorance of Marxism and of the real situation in Russia, many party historians come to rest in the safe haven of Lenin's most often quoted statement concerning the transition to socialism:

....from the democratic revolution we shall at once, according to the degree of our strength, the strength of the class conscious and organized proletariat, begin to pass over to the socialist revolution. We stand for continuous revolution. We shall not stop half way.²⁹

²⁷ Ibid., p. 187.

²⁸ Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 12, 1930, p. 13.

²⁹ V. I. Lenin, Sochineniia, Vol. VIII, p. 186. J. L. H. Keep, in his book The Rise of Social Democracy in Russia (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 198 notes that this was only a chance remark on Lenin's part which he did not develop further. Though party historians tended to over-emphasize the uninterrupted nature of the struggle that takes place from feudalism to socialism, they did cite sufficient evidence to

Toward the end of 1928 and the beginning of the following year, the problem of the transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution became an issue of great importance among Soviet historians. It was thoroughly discussed at the All Union Conference of Marxist Historians in January 1929 and reports on the subject were made at three meetings held by the Scientific Research Group of the Lenin Institute. Articles appeared in the party historical journals which presented several variations on the same theme, and they in turn, were contrasted with each other and closely examined in the party press for possible deviationist contamination.

In order to obtain a clear picture of the entire problem of revolutionary transitions, it is necessary to interrupt this discussion and examine the nature of the peasant movement of 1905 and the place of the peasantry in a bourgeois revolution.

show convincingly that this quotation from Lenin was not merely a "chance" remark. This was successfully accomplished by them because they did not limit themselves to the pronouncements Lenin made before or during 1905, but quoted ideas of later times also. Thus the fact that Lenin was more conservative in his Marxism in 1905 than in 1917 is either glossed over or explained in relation to changing economic conditions that took place between the two Russian revolutions.

The Role of the Peasant in the Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution of
1905

A conspicuously small number of theoretical articles dealing with the role of the peasants in the 1905 Revolution appeared in the party historical journals and books during the early 1920's. At this time the New Economic Policy demanded a comparatively more favorable attitude toward the peasants who had become the chief supporters of the country's devastated economy. But it was not a simple matter to find theoretical substantiation for these friendlier relations and party historians avoided the task of formulating a revised interpretation of the peasants' role in both the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist revolutions.³⁰

Only after 1925 was an increase of interest noted in Soviet theoretical writings, but hardly an increase in enthusiasm about the virtues of the Russian peasant. One feels strongly that the alliance with the peasant, even after 1917, was a matter of ideological expediency -- the correct procedure for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is the impression made by V. Bystriansky's article "Lenin and the Peasantry in the First Revolution:"³¹

³⁰Numerous monographs and books on the peasant movement of 1905 did appear before 1925 but they were not of a theoretical nature.

³¹It must be noted that while Proletarskaia revoliutsiia was the leading history journal issued in Moscow, Krasnaia letopis' was the history organ of the Leningrad party organization and a more anti-peasant bias should be expected in an article appearing in it in 1925. According to L. Schapiro, op. cit., p. 290 "...the powerful Leningrad party organization...enjoyed some degree of independence as well as the old tradition dating from the early history of the party when Petersburg was the premier committee. The Leningrad communists were moreover proletarians in outlook, if not always by social origin, and therefore the more readily inclined to follow radical, anti-peasant views."

If the central factor, the pivot of Marxism-Leninism is the teaching of the dictatorship of the proletariat, then the preservation of the union of the class of the dictatorship with the peasantry is for the overwhelming majority of the country an indispensable condition of stability of the rule of the proletariat.³²

Bystriansky traces this union back to 1905, when Lenin set before the workers and peasants the task to destroy the survivals of serfdom and feudalism "and also the corresponding feudal economic order of the superstructure of tsarist autocracy."³³

Because the workers and peasants had the same grievances against the regime and society at large during the First Revolution, they were well suited to each other in the struggle for a democratic government. But the alliance was not intended to be one of equals; the workers were not to share their leading position even with their closest collaborators. While the peasantry "fought side by side with the proletariat," continued Bystriansky, it was fought "not sufficiently consistently, decisively and energetically."³⁴

This "alliance" of the peasants and the workers during 1905 -- an alliance that was to be consummated in the dictatorship of the workers and peasants -- seems to have given the Soviet historians of the 1920's a certain amount of mental discomfort. On the one hand, the peasants had been shown by Lenin to have been unreliable and ambivalent politically and therefore not completely trustworthy, and on the other hand, it was their very presence, their share in the revolutionary movement, which made the bourgeois-democratic revolution

³² Krasnaia letopis' No. 3, 1925, p. 6.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 9.

of 1905 unique. "The mighty peasant movement in Russia had no equal in the West," a party historian declared, "the peasant character of our revolution distinguished it from all other bourgeois revolutions."³⁵ Yet the same historian also points out that the political consciousness of the peasant was still so low that his clumsy behavior during the revolutionary years must be considered one of the basic reasons for the defeat.³⁶

The Revolution of 1905, as we already know, was to be a bourgeois revolution without the presence of the bourgeois. In the Leninist scheme, the bourgeoisie plainly had no part in the dynamics of the revolution. Indeed, it had been completely "paralyzed" as a result of the "capitalist contradictions" that had arisen and its place had to be taken by the workers and the revolutionary peasantry. It was only the lower stratum of this unfortunate bourgeois class -- the petty bourgeoisie -- that was given the position of rear-guard in the revolutionary army, in which the workers represented the front ranks. And in Russia, Lenin had explained, the petty bourgeoisie was composed almost entirely of peasants.³⁷ But in spite of their weaknesses and

³⁵Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 12, 1930, p. 10.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷The party historian R. Amburskii shows that Lenin formalized the slogan "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" toward the end of February 1905 in the article "Novye zadachi i novye sily." But he also shows that in rough drafts composed earlier the same month, Lenin had conceived of the problem in different words. In his plans for the resolutions to be passed during the III Congress the idea of a "revolutionary dictatorship" was expressed in the slogan "revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and petty-bourgeoisie in the period of the overthrow of autocracy." (from Leninskii Sbornik, V, p. 202). Amburskii explains that "the concept 'petty-bourgeois' is still given in code and needed concretization." In Lenin's article mentioned above, in which he noted the need for a

low-ranking position, the peasants of 1905 did manage to win a theoretical prize: "The very great role which the peasantry played in the Russian revolution...justifies the application of the term 'peasant bourgeois revolution' to the movement of 1905-1907."³⁸

The peasants were now firmly identified with the petty-bourgeoisie -- a two-faced sub-class -- whose revolutionary virtues left a great deal to be desired. F. Bystrykh, in a detailed article about Lenin's views on the agrarian question, quotes from Druz'ia Naroda -- that fountainhead of Leninism, in which party historians so often try to find the seeds of Bolshevism -- to show the dual nature of the petty-bourgeoisie:

It (the petty bourgeoisie - F. B.) is progressive in so far as it introduces general democratic demands, i.e., fights against whatever remains of the middle ages and serfdom; it is reactionary in that it fights for the preservation of its position as the petty bourgeoisie, trying to delay and turning back the general development of the country in a bourgeois direction.³⁹

The only sensible thing to do, therefore, was to "'fight against the reactionary side,' and strengthen, support, their progressive side."⁴⁰

struggle against the Menshevik fear of "the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry (Sochineniia, vol. VIII, p. 144), the concept "petty-bourgeois" was "decoded" into the concept "peasantry," for, Amburskii states, "the peasantry in Russia in 1905 was decidedly the basic detachment of the petty-bourgeoisie." Typical of all party historians of that time and even later, Amburskii proceeded to show that the essence of this idea of the "dictatorship" was already revealed in Lenin's writings of 1894 ("What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight Against the Social-Democrats") and in 1902 in the brochure "Chto delat'?" (Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 12, 1930, pp. 5-6).

³⁸Krasnaia letopis' No. 3, 1925, p. 15.

³⁹Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 1, 1928, p. 4, quoting Lenin's Sochineniia I, p. 184.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 5.

The progressive desires of the petty bourgeoisie, as can be seen from the above quotations, demanded the liquidation of the survivals of feudalism in the countryside and the preparation for the inevitably necessary stage of capitalism in agriculture.

Party historians liked to point out that in other countries too, even under the different conditions underlying past revolutions in the West, the peasantry was never able to occupy a leading position. Traditionally, therefore, the peasants followed the leadership of an other class. Thus, when the bourgeois class in Russia in 1905 was rejected as an active force, the peasantry was not to take its place as leaders.⁴¹

It was made clear to the Soviet reader that only the workers could lead the peasants in the revolutionary movement and the picture they reveal is that of an agile trainer pushing and prodding a yawning and clumsy bear onto the stage of history.

Only under the leadership of the proletariat is the peasant able to triumph over all the enemies [declares Bystrianskii] to demolish the tsarist monarchy and destroy the landed aristocracy -- only the proletariat is able to bring to the spontaneous peasant movement the centralization and organization it lacks. The proletariat plays the role of leader and chief in relation to the peasantry ... 'Without the initiative and leadership by the proletariat of the peasantry, [Lenin stated] there is nothing.'⁴²

Party historians thus have to describe the make-up of the "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" very carefully: the

⁴¹Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 179.

⁴²Krasnaia letopis' No. 3, 1925, p. 15, quoting Lenin 1st ed. Sochineniia, vol. XI, pt. I, p. 81.

negative aspects of the peasantry remain linked with its petty bourgeois background, while their revolutionary potentials are joined with those of the workers to form the political and militant organ that was to take the place of the overthrown tsarist autocracy.

In spite of all the drawbacks and disappointing characteristics which Lenin saw in the peasantry -- and which party historians reflect so dramatically -- he still preferred the rural petty bourgeoisie as a partner in the revolutionary alliance to the liberal bourgeoisie which the Mensheviks had chosen allies. Thus, in relation to the distrusted urban bourgeoisie, the peasants' role in the revolution was glibly elevated to the level of the workers when it was a matter of formulating slogans. Bystriansky quotes Lenin's assertion from

Two Tactics:

The bourgeois revolution under the leadership of the bourgeoisie can only be an incomplete revolution It can be really revolutionary only under the leadership of the proletariat and the peasantry."⁴³

While the dual nature of the peasants caused understandable heartache to Lenin when he raised them to revolutionary partnership, and even greater mental anguish to the party historians who had to justify this rural promotion to the revolutionary combine, life was made a little easier for the writers when they could delineate the class struggle in the countryside in more formal terms and leave aside the problems raised by the peasants' lack of political maturity. Very simply, Lenin saw two sets of "contradictions", demanding two separate wars in rural Russia: 1) when all the peasants will fight against all

⁴³Ibid.

the landowners, and 2) when the rural proletariat will carry on a struggle against the rural and urban bourgeoisie.

Once more, it is evident that Lenin's plans for a bourgeois revolution always conclude with the socialist revolution, and party historians do everything possible to highlight this goal. The first step in the revolutionary movement in the countryside represents the establishment of capitalism, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, that indefinite period of time when class antagonisms sharpen and the transition from one revolution to the next is being prepared. And it is made clear by Lenin and the party historians after him that only during this first stage can the peasantry and the proletariat fight in unison, for in the socialist revolution, class relationships will have changed and new alignments formed.

In one variation or another, sometimes quoted directly and sometimes only paraphrased, the following outline from Two Tactics serves party historians best in their presentation of Lenin's views on the two stages of the peasant movement and its relationship to the workers in the cities:

The absence of unity in questions of socialism and the struggle for socialism does not prevent unity of will on questions of democracy and the struggle for a republic. To forget this would be tantamount to forgetting the logical and historical differences between democratic revolution and a socialist revolution. To forget this would mean forgetting the national character of the democratic revolution: if it is "national" it means that there must be "unity of will" precisely in so far as this revolution satisfies the national need and requirement. Beyond the boundaries of democracy there can be no unity of will between the proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie. Class struggle between them is inevitable; but on the basis of a democratic republic this

struggle will be the most far-reaching and extensive struggle of the people for socialism. Like everything else in the world, the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has a past and a future. Its past is autocracy, serfdom, monarchy and privilege. In the struggle against this past, in the struggle against counterrevolution, a "united will" of the proletariat and peasantry is possible, for there is unity of interests.

Its future is the struggle against private property, the struggle of the wage earner against the master, the struggle for socialism. In this case unity of will is impossible. Here our path lies not from autocracy to a republic, but from a petty-bourgeois democratic republic to Socialism.⁴⁴

Lenin can be seen looking forward to the days of political freedom with eager anticipation: in a footnote which follows the penultimate sentence of the above quotation, he remarks:

The development of capitalism which is more extensive and rapid under conditions of freedom will inevitably put a speedy end to the unity of will; the sooner the counter-revolution and reaction are crushed, the speedier will the unity of will come to an end.⁴⁵

Continuing Lenin's outline for the future of the countryside, party historians again present their readers with two possible roads of social and economic development which Lenin had foreseen through analogies with the past. Reminiscent of Lenin's dual prognosis for the bourgeois revolution in general -- the possibility that 1905 may follow the model of the French Revolution of 1789 or the German one of 1848-50 -- the Russian rural economy faced the possibility of following a so-called "Prussian-Junker" road of development, or an "American" one.

⁴⁴Lenin, N. Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution, Vol. X of Works of Marxism-Leninism, (New York, 1935), pp. 70-71.

⁴⁵Ibid.

The two roads of development of capitalism are depicted in the following manner by F. Bystrykh, and reveals the close similarity between the two sets of analogies:

The Prussian-Junker way -- that way is slow, costly, with internal reforms of the serf latifundia in capitalist agriculture. The barshchina-slave relationships die out extremely slowly, because in a period of crisis and depression there begins a regressive movement ... The productive forces develop in the clutches of a decrepit feudalism. Capitalism was born under excruciatingly difficult conditions. To the sufferings of the people under maturing capitalism, are added the still greater agonies of the surviving middle ages.

The American way is quite another thing -- it is the way of a quick assault by capitalism on feudalism, the way to the destruction of the latter, and not an accommodation to the existing feudal form of rural ownership. This way was quickest and cheapest. The class contradictions developed right away on a new capitalist basis.⁴⁶

And so, we have two sets of contradictions in the countryside which must be resolved by the waging of two class wars, one for each of the two revolutionary stages that will lead to socialism. But the first of these, the capitalist stage, can develop in two possible directions: either a "liberal, landowners reform" or a peasant revolution; either a "Prussian-Junker" or an "American-farmer" type of agricultural capitalist development. "In this lies the kernel of the revolution. The entire content of our revolution lies in the struggle between these two paths."⁴⁷

The similarity between the French Revolution as a model for Russia and the "American" direction of capitalist development is quite evident. Thus, Lenin's hopes, not unmixed with fears that the alternate way -- the Prussian model -- may win out in Russia, were based on the prospects of a "Franco-American" victory.

⁴⁶ Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 1, 1928, pp. 23-24.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

The Problem of Revolutionary Transition

It has already been mentioned that the problem that engrossed party historians during the last years of the 1920's -- just before and during the first large-scale purge of the older "bourgeois" historians -- concerned the mechanics of revolutionary transition. In the foregoing section, we left Lenin's analysis of Russian economic development at the cross-roads: would it follow the "American" road of capitalism -- would it be possible to destroy feudalism completely and quickly -- or would this economic development drag itself on to the reformist "Prussian" path and toward an ignoble compromise with the forces of feudalism? Assuming that the Russian revolutionary movement is able to guide capitalism into an "American" channel, what was to happen after the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution? How was the bourgeois-democratic revolution to grow over into a socialist revolution?

Basing themselves upon Lenin's schematization for the Revolution of 1905 which we have just examined, party historians presented an even more elaborate history of Lenin's formulation of these ideas and showed how they served not only as the basis for his tactics in 1905, but also how they became the foundation for his revised plans for directing the revolutionary transition between February and October 1917. Thus, the statement made by Lenin in 1920 that the First Russian Revolution was the prologue to the Great October Revolution was clearly implied by party historians in their analyses of Lenin's political theories of 1905.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Lenin, V. I., Sochinenia, vol. XXV, p. 176, 2nd ed. Oskar Anweiler, in his article "Die Russische Revolution von 1905," Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, 1955/1956, pp. 161-193, calls attention to the fact that even in the Western presentations, the history of 1905 is

The ideas Lenin expressed on revolutionary transition in 1905 served as still another type of prologue: they formed the basis for guiding current revolutions abroad. Just as the revolutions of 18th and 19th century France and German, as depicted by Marx, served Lenin with guidelines for the Russian Revolution of 1905, so now the Soviet leaders offered the Russian experiences of 1905, as depicted by Lenin, to the industrially underdeveloped countries of Asia, the Middle East and South America. For the same reasons that the Bolsheviks during the First Russian Revolution did not want to imitate blindly the Jacobins of 1789, so too was 1905 not to be simply a model which other countries could copy without further analysis. Conditions had changed and revolutionary tactics had to be mapped out accordingly.

In the present study on the theoretical aspects of Soviet historiography on 1905, we shall examine the problem of revolutionary transition on the basis of the Bolshevik understanding of the nature and dynamics of the first Russian bourgeois-democratic revolution. We shall also attempt to determine the use that was made of these ideas in the radically altered scheme of revolutionary transition of the late 1920's for it was principally with current needs in mind that Soviet party historians analyzed the process of change that takes place between one revolution and the next.

often merely part of the pre-history of 1917 and that in this respect Western historians have followed the example of Soviet historians. Specifically, he mentions William H. Chamberlin's The Russian Revolution 1917-1921, E. H. Carr's The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923, and Hugh Seton-Watson's The Decline of Imperial Russia 1855-1917. Since the appearance of Anweiler's article at least one book devoted entirely to 1905 has been published: Sidney Harcave's First Blood, The Russian Revolution of 1905, (New York: Macmillan, 1964.)

One of the most detailed presentations of the problem of revolutionary transition, both as it was applied to Russia and to current revolutionary preparedness for transition abroad, is found in the writings of K. A. Popov, who was considered an outstanding party historian during the late 1920's and early 1930's.⁴⁹

Although his report on "The Problem of the Transition from the Bourgeois-Democratic to the Socialist Revolution" was only one among several to be concerned with this problem and the issues it brought up were still open to discussion, his formulation encompassed all the ideas current during the 1920's and contained many of the basic elements which eventually remained, fossilized, in Stalin's History of the CPSU(b).⁵⁰

While some historians base their analysis of the problem of revolutionary transition solely upon the writings of Lenin, Popov's

⁴⁹ Popov rose to become one of the secretaries of the Central Committee of the Party in the 1930's, but did not survive the Ezhov purge. (Shtepa, The Russian Historians and the Soviet State (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1962), p. 52.

⁵⁰ History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) Short Course (New York: International Publishers, 1939), pp. 73-77. The discussion on the problem of revolutionary transition can be followed, even though somewhat hectically, by reading the debates on the subject that appeared in the party press: Ia. Rezvushkin, "Lenin o pereastanii burzhuzno-demokraticheskoi revoliutsii v sotsialisticheskuiu," Proletarskaia revoliutsia No. 10, 1928, pp. 34-52, which is continued in No. 11-12, 1928, pp. 3-34; D. Kardashev, "Pererastania burzhuzno-demokraticheskoi revoliutsii v sotsialisticheskuiu v svete leninskoii teorii "amerikanskogo" i "prusskogo" puti razvitiia Rossii," Proletarskaia revoliutsia No. 2-3, 1929, which is continued in No. 5, 1929, pp. 17-60; a review by Stepanov in Proletarskaia revoliutsia No. 5, 1930, discussed both Kardashev's and Rezvushkin's views; see the discussions on K. A. Popov's report to the Scientific Research Group of the Lenin Institute in Proletarskaia revoliutsia, No. 5, 1929, pp. 170-184 at which Rezvushkin, El'vov, and others participated, as well as Popov's article "Von den historischen Bedingungen des Umschlagens der bürgerlich-demokratischen Revolution in die proletarische

approach goes farther back in time and shows how Lenin's ideas about the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905 were firmly based upon the teachings of Marx and Engels, and how ultimately, in 1917, Lenin was able to combine his own and Marx's ideas to create the scheme which was in fact carried out.

Popov began his report by establishing three principal characteristics of the 1905 Revolution: 1) it was a bourgeois revolution without a bourgeoisie; 2) it was a peasant revolution, and 3) the hegemony in it belonged to the proletariat. In other words, it was a bourgeois revolution that had turned into a peasant revolution and was led by the workers.⁵¹ As a result of these "unusual" characteristics, it was capable of turning into a socialist revolution.⁵²

The Leninist analysis of these three main points were shown to have been based on the writings of Marx and Engels, although it was "at the same time more developed and [better] formulated," because it was conceived under conditions of a far greater development of world capitalism and at a time when the development of capitalist relations in Russia were farther advanced than in the Germany of Marx's day.

Revolution," Unter dem Banner des Marxismus, Jahrgang III, Heft Nr. 3, (June 1929), pp. 346-380, continued in Heft Nr. 4, pp. 573-596. See also the report by N. Vanag, "Problema dvukh putei razvitiia kapitalizma v Rossii v rabotakh Lenina," Istorik Marksist, XXII, 1931, pp. 77-145.

⁵¹Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 5, 1929, p. 170.

⁵²U. B. M., Heft 3, p. 350.

Characteristically, Popov goes back to Marx's "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League" of 1850, to show the great similarity that existed between Marx's analysis of the German Revolution of 1848 and Lenin's understanding of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905.⁵³

In the first place, Lenin could lean comfortably upon the statements Marx had made to discredit the leadership capabilities of the liberal bourgeoisie in Germany and his assertion that the latter could achieve victory only through an alliance with the forces of feudalism.

The second point that Lenin could make good use of, was Marx's contention that only the petty-bourgeoisie, the peasants and the proletariat would be able to play a revolutionary role in the "German bourgeois-democratic revolution." Thirdly, Marx had emphasized the need to maintain an independent, well-organized workers' party and warned against the merging of the needs of the workers with those of the liberal bourgeoisie, or even with the democratic petty-bourgeoisie. "The proletariat and its party must formulate and carry through its own independent class goals in the forthcoming revolution," Popov paraphrased Marx, and in order to carry out these goals, the revolution must be made "permanent", i.e., it must not end the struggle "until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their posi-

⁵³ In his exposition, Popov uses other Marxist sources as well, but lays the basis for the correlation by using the "Address".

tion of dominance, until the proletariat has conquered state power.. .⁵⁴

A fourth point, of a more doubtful value, but which Popov still brings forth from Marx's "Address" concerns the fact that the "permanent" revolution of the German proletariat must still go through a petty-bourgeois stage in which the workers would not have a leading part. In this somewhat "Menshevik" situation, the Democrats (i.e., the petty-bourgeoisie) will be allied with the peasants, and the urban workers with the rural proletariat. "Together with the rural proletariat ...the workers will go through the permanent revolution and succeed in winning power."⁵⁵

As was the case in Lenin's concept of 1905, the struggle in Germany would be directed against feudalism.⁵⁶ But unlike Lenin's formulation, the proletariat would attain the leading position only when the bourgeois-democratic revolution grows over into the socialist revolution. Popov emphasized the fact that in the Marxist scheme there was no counter-part to Lenin's "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry." When Plekhanov had reproached Lenin for being un-Marxist in demanding the creation of such an organ, Lenin had defended himself by showing that conditions in Russia were different than in Germany, that the Russian proletariat already had its own

⁵⁴Ibid., p.352 and Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League," Selected Works in Two Volumes (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1951). I. p. 102.

⁵⁵Marx himself is not quite so clear in this matter of class alignment; see Ibid, pp. 98-108. As a result, Popov spends a somewhat uncomfortable paragraph in distinguishing between the various social groups in Germany in order to find a suitable analogy between Marx's and Lenin's class struggles. (U.B.M., Heft 3, p. 353.)

⁵⁶In 1850 Marx and Engels had considered Tsarist Russia "semi-Asiatic" as distinct from the "feudal" and "capitalist" societies

party and was so well organized that it could even make its influence felt among the peasants, while the German workers of the mid-19th century still had to free themselves from the authority and leadership of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie democrats.⁵⁷

But in spite of the differences that existed in the two countries and in the corresponding plans of Marx and Lenin, the similarities, according to party historians, were of greater significance: both men had rejected completely the revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie in bringing the bourgeois-democratic revolution to its end and both of them had emphasized the importance of the peasant in the revolutionary movement (though party historians admit that Lenin had gone further than Marx in this matter.) In both cases the proletariat would be

of Europe, while the societies of China and India were termed "Asiatic." This terminology, as part of the Marxist scheme of periodization was accepted by Lenin before World War I, but in the writings of Soviet historians on Lenin's theories concerning the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905, the expression "remnants of feudalism" or of "serfdom" is used most commonly. One would have expected that Soviet historians would have followed the periodization formulated by Pokrovsky, the leading historian of the time, but there is little trace of his "merchant capitalism" in Soviet monographs on Leninism in 1905. In general, matters of periodization were still quite confused during the 1920's and it was only in 1931 that the problem was discussed in detail. It was then that the decision was made to consider the year 1861 the end of the Russian "feudal" period, and then it became quite consistent to say that the major task of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905 was to tear down the "remnants of feudalism." See Diskussia ob aziatskom sposobe proizvodstva, ed. by M. Godes (1931). For a recent Soviet review and re-evaluation of the discussions concerning the Asiatic mode of production, see L. V. Danilova, "Discussion of an Important Problem," Voprosy filosofii, No. 12, 1965, pp. 148-156.

⁵⁷U.B.M. heft 3, p. 353.

supported by the peasantry and petty-bourgeoisie against feudalism, but, we are told, the workers would maintain their class independence and would continue to carry out their independent task -- to make the revolution permanent -- to continue it without interruption until the proletarian seizure of power in the second stage of the revolution is effected.

A final Leninist view that was easily found in Marx's "Address" and of which Soviet leaders made good use, concerned the need for revolutionary aid from abroad. In the case of Germany, Marx had expected that the outbreak of a French revolution would coincide with the German one and that both of them could serve as a prologue for a general revolutionary war involving all of Europe.

Nearly every step in Lenin's thinking was traced back to a Marxian source by Popov, so that the Soviet reader was able to visualize a complete history of the theoretical basis underlying the bourgeois-democratic revolutions in Russia -- from the origin of the ideas in 1850 to their realization in the socialist revolution of 1917.

Probably the most succinct enumeration of the steps a bourgeois revolution must take before it reaches socialism is Lenin's unpolished "Stages, Trends and Prospects of the Revolution," written at the beginning of 1906 and providing an inexhaustible source of quotations for party historians. Because it is concerned almost entirely with the period just before, during and after 1905, and combines both the Marxist influence and Lenin's newly synthesized ideas, it is worthwhile to read it in full:

1. The labour movement rouses the proletariat immediately under the leadership of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and awakens the liberal bourgeoisie: 1895 to 1901-02.

2. The labour movement passes to open political struggle and carried with it the politically awakened strata of the liberal and radical bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie: 1901-02 to 1905.

3. The labour movement flares up into a direct revolution while the liberal bourgeoisie has already united in a Constitutional-Democratic Party and thinks of stopping the revolution by compromising with tsarism; but the radical elements of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie are inclined to enter into an alliance with the proletariat for the continuation of the revolution: 1905 (especially the end of that year).

4. The labour movement is victorious in the democratic revolution, the liberals passively temporising and the peasants actively assisting. To this must be added the radical republican intelligentsia and the corresponding strata of the urban petty bourgeoisie. The uprising of the peasants is victorious, the power of the landlords is broken.

("The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.")

5. The liberal bourgeoisie, temporising in the third period, passive in the fourth, become downright counter-revolutionary, and organises itself in order to filch from the proletariat the gain of the revolution. The whole of the well-to-do section of the peasantry and a large part of the middle peasantry also grow "wiser," quieten down and turn to the side of the counter-revolution in order to wrest power from the proletariat and the rural poor, who sympathise with the proletariat.

6. On the basis of the relations established during the fifth period, a new crisis and a new struggle blaze forth; the proletariat is now fighting to preserve its democratic gains for the sake of a socialist revolution. This struggle would be almost hopeless for the Russian proletariat alone and its defeat would be as inevitable as the defeat of the German revolutionary party in 1849-50, or as the defeat of the French proletariat in 1871 if the European socialist proletariat should not come to the assistance of the Russian proletariat.

Thus, at this stage, the liberal bourgeoisie and the well-to-do peasantry (and partly the middle peasantry) organise counter-revolution. The Russian proletariat plus the European proletariat organise revolution.

Under such conditions the Russian proletariat can win a second victory. The cause is no longer hopeless. The second victory will be the socialist revolution in Europe.

The European workers will show us "how to do it" and then in conjunction with them, we shall bring about the socialist revolution. 58

This short draft, together with Lenin's other writings, especially Two Tactics, comprise the material party historians use to sum up the process of transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist one.

Over and over, we are led back to the fundamental notion that there are two stages⁵⁹ in the revolutionary road to socialism. First, the bourgeois-democratic stage in which the driving force is the alliance of workers and all the peasants, and secondly, the socialist revolution in which the poorest peasants join the proletariat in a class war against the bourgeoisie. This was the unalterable pattern-- everything else was considered an elaboration which made the Bolshevik point of view unique and which eventually changed the unalterable pattern itself.

According to the party historian Ia. Rezvushkin, the transition from one stage to the next was historically inevitable. The two stages, he felt, were described by Lenin as being so closely connected to one

⁵⁹Ia. Rezvushkin found it necessary to add a long footnote to the opening sentence of his first article on revolutionary transition in which he speaks of two stages and two revolutions interchangeably. For one of his reasons that it is better to speak of two revolutions he notes the fact that in 1905 Lenin had visualized the bourgeois-democratic revolution passing through several stages -- six of them -- but that there were still only two revolutions: the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist. (Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 10, 1928, p. 34.)

another that the one could not be understood without the other. Only by studying both stages, he felt, could one grasp Lenin's complete formulation of the problem of revolutionary transition. An abundance of quotations from Lenin's works are cited in which the two stages follow each other to socialism.⁶⁰ While Lenin is nowhere shown to discuss the problem of inevitability in connection with the transition to socialism, it is difficult to deny the consistency with which socialism follows capitalism in Lenin's documented train of thought, or the basic Marxist axiom that socialism must follow capitalism.⁶¹

Aside from the matter of inevitability, party historians tried to show their readers just how the transition from one revolution to the next takes place and what conditions would be like during the period between feudalism and socialism.

According to Rezvushkin, Lenin felt that under the economic conditions of 1905, the period of transition was to take a considerably long time. (This is usually contrasted with Lenin's plan for transition to socialism in 1917, when only a short period of time was indicated.)

⁶⁰ Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 10, 1928, pp. 36-37.

⁶¹ The question of inevitability was discussed at some length by party historians who remembered that Lenin had considered the possibility of either an "American" kind of economic development or a Prussian kind, and that although he wanted to fight for the "American" direction, he did not think an "American" victory inevitable. (See Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 5, 1930 and Proletarskaia revoliutsiia Nos. 2-3, p. 121.)

It would take place under the close supervision and through the actions of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry whose task it would be to resolve the contradictions which caused the outbreak of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Its task, as has been pointed out before, was a dual one -- it had to combat the remnants of feudalism while at the same time prepare conditions for the socialist revolution. These were the "tasks" of the bourgeois revolution, according to Lenin, and the "dictatorship" was the regime that would carry out these tasks. For purely practical purposes it was believed by Lenin that a democratic republic under capitalism would offer the best climate to carry out this double assignment. Unfortunately, Lenin left very little precise information about the actual operation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. A very characteristic treatment of any weakness in both the theory and in its practical effect, was to contrast these negative aspects of the revolution of 1905 with the unqualified success of the October Revolution:

In 1905 the problem of the transition from the bourgeois-democratic stage of the revolution to the socialist one was not yet "the order of the day" and therefore the concrete details of this plan had not yet been worked out. This was done in 1917 when the question of the transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist one was, precisely, "the order of the day."⁶²

Perhaps it is for this reason that party historians are often reduced to repeating rather dogmatically: "The final victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution is nothing else than the establishment of the

⁶² Proletarskaia revoliutsiia Nos. 11-12, 1928, p. 5.

dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry," without going into further detail.⁶³

The historian Amburskii, however, gives us an insight into its far-reaching nature. When the tsarist autocracy falls, he tells us, there cannot yet be any question of the masses possessing a "social-democratic consciousness and therefore it is necessary to have a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry."⁶⁴ Thus, instead of waiting for the political consciousness of the masses to mature, as the Mensheviks insisted on doing, Lenin had conceived of

⁶³ Kermit E. McKenzie, in his essay "Lenin's 'Revolutionary Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry'" points out that Lenin is nowhere very clear about the matter of the distribution of power within the future "democratic dictatorship" between the workers, who in 1905 only formed a small minority of the population and the peasants who represented the overwhelming majority. "But," Professor McKenzie points out, "the spirit and fire of Lenin and his own unshakeable faith in himself strongly suggests that he would never have accepted a minority status in such a government." (Essays in Russian and Soviet History, pp. 160-161.) The Soviet party historians of the 1920's never left any doubt about the retention of proletarian hegemony at all times and "the spirit and fire of Lenin" was faithfully transmitted by them to their readers.

⁶⁴ Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 12, 1930, p. 15.

a far more rapid and forceful approach -- the establishment of a center of political leadership which was to reveal to the masses the proper norms of political behavior.

An even more functional designation for the "dictatorship" was suggested by M. Liadov:

In order to secure and defend the victory over autocracy, we need a dictatorship, an organization for war, and not for order, because having overthrown the tsar, we must organize against our class enemies, the reactionary gentry and liberal bourgeoisie. The overthrow of autocracy is not for us an end in itself, but only an expanding of the possibilities for the struggle for socialism.⁶⁵

Although the tasks and the nature of the democratic dictatorship were thus more or less definable, the Soviet historians still had the problem of fitting the dictatorship into a proper framework of political institutions. Due to the lack of clarity in Lenin's pronouncements, Soviet historians were unable to disentangle the growing number of ruling bodies visualized by Lenin and to distinguish their respective functions.

A composite picture that one obtains from a reading of Soviet writings suggests that the bourgeois revolution will be carried out under a dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, during which time a provisional revolutionary government was also to be created. This provisional government, in which the Social Democrats were to

⁶⁵Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 3, 1921, p. 72.

participate, was to have as its main function the guaranteeing of fair elections to the Constituent Assembly, which in turn would form a democratic government. How these bodies were to interrelate and to what degree they would overlap was not revealed. It is not unusual, for instance, for a historian to speak alternately of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry and of the provisional revolutionary government.⁶⁶ One can only assume, on the basis of common usage, that the provisional revolutionary government is to be considered a functional organ of power under the general dominion of a democratic dictatorship.

Whatever the precise role of these bodies in the executive branch of the forthcoming revolutionary government, one thing was made clear -- they were no more than temporary organizations. This piece of information by itself, although consistent within the theoretical framework as a whole, does not have very much specific value, for the entire bourgeois-democratic stage of the revolution was considered only a temporary situation.

⁶⁶The authors of Istoriia VKP(b) attribute to the provisional revolutionary government a fighting role rather than the more administrative one of supervising the elections to the Constituent Assembly because they too speak alternately of the democratic dictatorship and the provisional revolutionary government: "Lenin connected the question of the provisional revolutionary government, its origin and tasks, with the question of armed uprising and the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. According to Lenin the provisional revolutionary government must be an organ of the armed uprising, created in the process of uprising to achieve the task of leading the revolution to its end." (vol. II, p. 194.) "The provisional revolutionary government -- and in this lies one of its distinguishing features -- is not an organ of 'order', but an organ of armed uprising." (p. 195) Kermit McKenzie, op. cit., p. 156, also lacks clarity when he says: "The temporary revolutionary govern-

But "temporary" we should recall, did not mean "short."

Rezvushkin as well as other historians who discussed the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905, point out that the period of transition, according to Lenin, would take many years. Unlike 1917, 1905 represented an epoch when capitalism was still relatively weak, when Russia was not yet able to enjoy the harsh benefits of full-blown imperialism. This period of transition during which the capitalist contradictions were expected to continue to grow, was depicted as a modern "Time of Troubles."

Rezvushkin referred to those times as "years of trial" (gody ispytani)⁶⁷ -- a period of suffering and turmoil, especially for the poorest peasants. The economic pressures would increase steadily and gradually would cause shifts in the social structure of the country. This would be the time when the alliance between the workers and the entire peasantry would break up, when the poorest peasants, as a result of their economic plight, would gradually go over to the side of the urban proletariat, while the middle peasant would go through a period of hostility (after the union of workers and peasants breaks up) and eventually become "neutralized." By the time the socialist struggle was to take place, a new alignment of classes would be drawn

ment is to exist between the overthrow of the Tsar and the convening of a Constituent Assembly, at which time the 'democratic dictatorship' will go out of existence."

⁶⁷Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 10, 1928, p. 41.

up: the poorest peasants and the proletariat would be ready to fight against the urban and rural bourgeoisie, while the middle peasant would remain a "neutral" force.⁶⁸

The rather disturbing prospect of a long period of turmoil is alleviated somewhat by the knowledge that two circumstances were to help in shortening the period of transition. The first is the existence of the very dictatorship of workers and peasants itself, whose nature and mode of operation was so difficult to define. Again, party historians do not offer detailed explanation for this projected blessing, but prefer to quote Lenin's famous statement: "[Just a few] months of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry are worth more than decades of the peaceful, torpid atmosphere of political stagnation."⁶⁹

⁶⁸From his reading of Two Tactics, Rezvushkin concluded that Lenin did not foresee a shift on the part of the poorest peasants to the side of the proletariat immediately "after the bourgeois-democratic revolution." "On the other hand," he said, "the alliance of the proletariat and the peasants as a whole will be broken." Thus, he points out, the poorest peasants were to become the allies of the workers only during the socialist revolution, whereas the "unity of will" of the workers and all the peasants was to end "after the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution." (Ibid., p. 43.)

⁶⁹The assumption can be made that the democratic dictatorship will be able to hasten the implementation of the Minimum Program and create conditions suitable for preparing the road to socialism. Here, one may see the dictatorship as acting in the name of Lenin's "vanguard" and giving history a push toward the completion of an unpleasant but unavoidable task. (The Lenin quotation: Ibid., p. 42.)

The second condition for shrinking the period of revolutionary transition was thought to be the influence of a West European proletarian revolution. Lenin had imagined a kind of "mutual aid program:" the outbreak of a bourgeois revolution in Russia would give the West a "push" toward its long-delayed socialist revolution. Then, "the European workers will show 'how to do it' and then in conjunction with them, we shall bring about the socialist revolution."⁷⁰

The initial Russian push which would awaken other countries was not merely a figure of speech: just as the workers of the world were supposed to have been united, so was the world's bourgeoisie -- a class that was by now everywhere completely reactionary. With the overthrow of autocracy in Russia, the Bolsheviks thought, the "gendarme of Europe" (The Russian Tsar) would be liquidated and the international proletariat would have greater freedom to prepare for revolution and bring aid to the Russian workers and peasants.

As far as other countries were concerned, the debates that took place on the problem of revolutionary transition at the I All-Union Conference of Marxist Historians and at the meeting of the Scientific Research Group of the Lenin Institute,⁷¹ reached the conclusion that "...at the present time every bourgeois-democratic revolution will inevitably grow over into a socialist one."⁷²

The debates on the Chinese revolution, which had been closely tied to the anti-Trotsky campaign necessitated a great deal of theo-

⁷⁰Lenin, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁷¹In both cases according to reports by K. A. Popov.

⁷²Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 5, 1929, p. 180.

retical manipulation.⁷³ With the ousting of Trotsky from the Communist Party in 1927, the campaign against the enemies from the "Right" was begun. Concurrently, the formerly dominant theory that China was to go through a bourgeois-democratic revolution similar to the Russian revolution of 1905 before it could reach socialism⁷⁴ was radically changed by the time of the XVI Party Congress in 1930, when a non-capitalist path was confirmed for the industrially backward countries of Asia.⁷⁵ Thus the speed with which one could travel to socialism increased even beyond "Trotskian" proportions, without, however, causing a decrease in the official condemnations against the original Russian advocate of the "permanent revolution."

Basing himself upon the program of the VI World Congress of the Communist International held two years earlier, K. A. Popov listed four groups of countries, each with its own particular level of economic development which determined its degree of preparation for revolutionary transition.⁷⁶

In the first category were the highly developed capitalist countries such as the United States, Germany and England. Here, the dictatorship of the proletariat could be established almost immediately.

⁷³Deutscher, op. cit., pp. 316-333.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵XVI S"ezd Vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi Partii (b) Stenograficheski otchet (Moscow: Partizdat, 1930). See, for instance the speech by Pavel Mif on the non-capitalist development envisioned for Mongolia, pp. 467-468.

⁷⁶U. B. M. Heft 3, pp. 346-347.

In second place were countries such as Spain, Portugal, Poland, Hungary and the Balkan states -- countries with an "intermediate" capitalist development. The situation in these countries may vary: in some places the bourgeois-democratic revolution could be carried out to the end and in others not. Colonial and semi-colonial countries (China, India, etc.) and "dependent" countries such as Argentina and Brazil, held third place in this list. Their industrial development was still considered too weak, still too closely tied to feudalism or dominated by the "Asiatic"⁷⁷ mode of production, so that a long series of stages were foreseen to proceed socialism in these countries. Still, a successful establishment of socialism would be possible even here with the direct aid from countries with a firmly established dictatorship of the proletariat. The fourth and last group of countries, according to the Comintern Program, consisted of the most backward ones, such as those located in various parts of Africa. Here, a tribal economy was still flourishing and problems concerning bourgeois or socialist formations were not applicable. However, a national revolution directed against foreign imperialism could be successfully carried out with the aid of other socialist countries, who could even "open up the road to socialism" without requiring these underdeveloped countries to go through the period of capitalism.

While in 1928, apparently, only this last group of very backward countries was permitted to skip the capitalist stage, very shortly

⁷⁷See Footnote 56.

thereafter the colonial and semi-colonial countries too, were allowed to pass directly to socialism with the help of other proletarian countries -- in other words, with the help of the Soviet Union.⁷⁸

Whereas in 1905 Lenin had believed that aid from the West European proletariat would guarantee the victory of socialism in Russia, the Soviet leaders in the late 1920's and early 1930's believed that Soviet aid to industrially underdeveloped countries would promote revolution and subsequently help achieve socialism there. By its accomplishments, the Soviet Union could now hold the same leading position in relation to the countries of Asia and the Middle East that Western Europe had held in relation to Russia before 1917. This, indeed, was the crowning achievement of "Socialism in One Country."

The Union of Socialist Republics and the successful construction of socialism in this Union opened up for those countries which have not yet completed their bourgeois-democratic revolution a wide possibility for a non-capitalist path of development.⁷⁹

Though the table of historical periodization was herewith obviously changed, party historians still felt compelled to issue the somewhat needless warning that it would be incorrect for other countries to copy the Russian Revolution of 1905. Neither an "American path" of capitalist development nor any other path was any longer relevant to the current situation in Asia and the Middle East: "The experience of the Revolution of 1905 must be reworked dialectically to apply to the basic conditions of each country" -- its class structure, the relative strength of its classes, the nature of each country's legal and illegal

⁷⁸U. B. M., Heft 3, p. 347; Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 6.

⁷⁹Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 6

organizations, an assessment of the relations that exist between the working class and the peasantry, the army, the handicraftsmen, the intelligentsia, etc.⁸⁰

Needless to say, by shaping a theoretical foundation for the sanctioning of a non-capitalist path to socialism for underdeveloped nations, the significance of the 1905 revolution was lessened, for it was, after all, concerned principally with that period of the transition that was now considered dispensable. The 1905 revolution, one notes, was demoted in historical importance to a second-class position.

The historian P. Prager, in an article on the non-capitalist future for underdeveloped countries, presented his readers with three basic types of bourgeois-democratic revolutions: The first is the French Revolution, which he calls the "classical type of bourgeois-democratic revolution, a revolution of the 'usual type.'"⁸¹ (Lenin had said that a bourgeois-democratic revolution of the "unusual type" was precisely that kind of a revolution that was able to grow over into socialism.⁸²) In this revolution, the bourgeoisie could play the leading role because it was still a revolutionary force, and by maintaining this leadership over both the workers and the peasants, there existed no reason or possibility for a transition to socialism.⁸³

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 4.

⁸¹Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 5, 1930, p. 66.

⁸²U. B. M., Heft 3, p. 348.

⁸³A reviewer of the literary output on the problem of revolutionary transition raised the question which preoccupied party historians greatly at this time: Is it possible "in general" to complete the bourgeois revolution without its growing over into a socialist one? This question, he felt, could not be treated so abstractly. "In

The Revolution of 1905 belonged to the second category. "This was already a bourgeois-democratic revolution not of the usual type," although its task in the final analysis consisted of clearing away the pre-capitalist obstacles in the path of a bourgeois development. Here, the revolution was to take place "apart from and against" the bourgeoisie, while the proletariat took the latter's place as leaders of the peasantry and as leaders of the revolution as a whole. The difference in the make-up of the active forces and the presence of a West European proletariat now finally ready to move on to socialism, made possible a revolutionary transition in Russia, but it was expected to be a "slow, lingering" process.

The third type of bourgeois-democratic revolution was the Revolution of February 1917. In this revolution both internal and international conditions set the course for world revolution and the transition to socialism was not merely projected for the undeterminable future, but had become, in the phraseology of party history, the basic "law" of the revolution. 1917, in contrast to 1905, had the benefit of greater social and economic "contradictions," the solutions of which required a more rapid transition to socialism.

general" did not indicate which specific period in history was under discussion. One must be more specific -- and the specific answer, according to him, was:

"In the epoch of the bourgeois revolution these revolutions are completed without growing over into a Socialist revolution.

"In the epoch of world proletarian revolutions the bourgeois-democratic revolution cannot resolve all its tasks without growing over into the socialist revolution. (Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 5, 1930, p. 263.)

In the heavy-handed manner of the party theoreticians, K. A. Popov explained why the tempo of the transition period invariably increases under certain changing conditions:

The possibility of transition becomes greater, becomes so much the more a historical necessity, the more the center of gravity within a country shifts from the contradictions of a serf character to those of a capitalist character, from the struggle against the landowners to the struggle against the bourgeoisie, from a peasant class direction of the revolution to a proletarian one.⁸⁴

These contradictions, furthermore, become even sharper when the capitalist nations also become torn by economic and social contradictions, for then the entire world will be moving in a proletarian direction and the period of transition to socialism will thereby become much shorter.

In 1905 Lenin had believed that a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia would herald a revolutionary revival in Europe from which Russia would, over a considerable period of time derive the benefits of a socialist transition. But in 1917 the triple combination of imperialist contradictions, as well as proletarian preparedness for revolution both at home and abroad, transformed the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia from being a mere instigator of revolutions in the West into an inseparable part of it. In 1917

...the union of internal and international conditions became so favorable that the possibility of a transition and its tempo grew simultaneously... [In 1917] the bourgeois-democratic revolution occurred simultaneously with the proletarian one and the latter resolved at the same time the tasks of the former.⁸⁵

⁸⁴U. B. M., Heft 4, p. 592.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 593.

At times, party historians become a little carried away by the speed with which the transition took place in 1917, but not far enough to forget that no matter how intertwined with socialism, the capitalist stage was not to be skipped completely during this period of imperialism.⁸⁶ Phrased in a more sophisticated way, the February-March 1917 revolution was one in which "the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution could not be completed without a transition to socialism."⁸⁷

An unlisted fourth type of revolution was the one that was no longer bourgeois-democratic. With increasingly favorable international condition, by which was meant that there existed a true proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union, the possibility of a non-capitalist path to socialism became feasible, though each individual country was to undergo independent analysis of its internal conditions. The best possible conditions for the transition to socialism were, naturally, those which had existed in 1917 in Russia, where the "contradictions of modern imperialism were present." But not every country had to be so fortunate. Popov pointed out that just because the transition to socialism took place in Russian under conditions of imperialism, this did not mean that it could not take place elsewhere under other conditions. Marx and Engels, he noted, spoke of the possibility of a "permanent revolution" in Germany in the middle of the 19th century, and Lenin was able to formulate a plan for the transition of the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution under conditions prevailing in

⁸⁶Proletarskaia revoliutsia No. 5, 1930, p. 66.

⁸⁷Proletarskaia revoliutsia No. 5, 1930, p. 263.

1905-1907 -- when modern imperialism was still in its early stages "and had not yet been discovered by [him] through Marxist analysis."⁸⁸ Popov thereby leaves the reader to conclude that there was no reason why Asia, under even stranger circumstances, could not join the socialist camp also.

The flimsiness of Popov's logic is hardly strengthened by Prager's search for a Marxist theoretical justification for avoiding capitalism in the underdeveloped countries. The change in the Marxist scheme of periodization was definitely in a Socialist Revolutionary direction and Prager finds himself skating on very thin ice toward his theoretical source -- Marx's correspondence with the Narodniks of the 1870's. Comparing 19th century Russia with the 20th century underdeveloped countries, he says:

Marx and Engels considered the socialist revolution in the West to be the basic, decisive and necessary condition for a non-capitalist path in the Russia of that period. Only under these conditions did they consider a perspective of non-capitalist development in Russia. This is very important. The clarification of this question is also important because it at once eliminated [criticism] concerning concessions to Narodnichestvo.⁸⁹

Thus, the existence of a proletarian state in the Soviet Union offered boundless opportunities and even served to justify so basic a change in Marxism as a non-capitalist path of development toward socialism.

⁸⁸U. B. M., Heft 3, p. 349.

⁸⁹Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 5, 1930, p. 84.

* . * . *

We have seen how party historians have analyzed Lenin's ideas concerning the character and dynamics of the Revolution of 1905. Quite clearly, to the Bolsheviks the significance of the 1905 revolution lay in its ability to move forward -- toward socialism. The character of the revolution could not be separated from its moving forces, for it was necessary to know not only that the 1905 revolution was bourgeois in its nature but also how and by whom this revolution would be kept moving toward its final goal. The bourgeois-democratic revolution was depicted as a temporary stage which, if its agents succeeded in carrying out their proper functions under the proper economic conditions -- if they could resolve the feudal contradictions that had brought on the revolution and could carry out the Social Democratic Minimum Program -- it would, by virtue of this success, grow over into socialism. Thus, a correct understanding of the complete meaning of a bourgeois-democratic revolution under the conditions prevailing in Russia in 1905 also imparted a well-founded understanding of the problem of the transition of the bourgeois-democratic revolution to a socialist one -- for the simple reason that the bourgeois-democratic revolution itself was the transition to socialism.

The bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905 was by its very nature shown to be in a transitory, moving state. The time involved was made dependent upon the internal and external conditions of a given country, so that with changing circumstances, the "tempo" would also change. The issue between the Bolsheviks and their political rivals did not so much concern the length of time involved in a revolutionary transition to socialism, as it did the correct delineation of tasks to be revolved

during that time --how they were to be resolved and by whom.⁹⁰

Thus it was possible to juggle the length of time that had to be spent between revolutions as long as it could be shown that conditions were "ripe" for change when the time for transition was announced.

When it came to describing Russia's more momentous revolution in 1917, no one denied that an entirely different set of circumstances had required completely new revolutionary tactics, but party historians were unable to make up their minds whether Lenin had actually formulated a new plan for revolutionary transition or whether he had merely modified his original 1905 blueprints. The conclusion reached was safe enough: there were indeed two plans, one for 1905 and one for 1917; but the latter had in it all the elements of the former.⁹¹ The reluctance to break the chain which linked Lenin to Marx and a younger Lenin to an older one was so great that when even the entire schematization had evolved into a radically different form, all the steps in that evolution of thought had to be recalled in chronological order.

By 1930 the ideas in the history of the Revolution of 1905 had very little practical value for the current situation in under-developed nations, but nevertheless a renewed interest took place in the First Russian Revolution as a guide for the general problem of

⁹⁰ Party historians do not make this distinction but prefer to condemn their party enemies, quite unjustly but more effectively, both for misjudging the length of time to be allocated and for their inability to know how to make use of that time.

⁹¹ Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 11-12, 1928, pp. 3-4 and Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 5, 1929, p. 172.

the First Russian Revolution as a guide for the general problem of revolutionary transition. This in turn necessitated a review of the entire character and dynamics of that revolution in order to present a correct point of view.

Thus, the political theories of the first Russian Revolution were fashioned to form a central link in an ideological chain that stretched from 1850 to 1905 to 1917 and is then extended to satisfy the needs of current Soviet policies. With each step in this progression, the period of bourgeois-democracy was shortened and modified, until the actual existence of the successful dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union superceded and replaced entirely the theoretical teachings of the Revolution of 1905. In spite of this the Revolution of 1905 remained the traditional starting point for all discussion concerning revolutionary change and Lenin's writings on 1905 continued to be the basic Soviet text both for the history of the First Russian Revolution itself and for inspiration in adapting its theories to new conditions.

CHAPTER III

TACTICAL PROBLEMS OF 1905

The Convocation of the III Congress

In a quiet, almost deserted little street in the north end of London, near Middleton Square, in the small stuffy attic of the emigre Alekseev, plans were made for assigning conspiratorial quarters for the delegates arriving from Russia. In small groups, they were making their way secretly across the border¹

Among those already in London in the spring of 1905 to prepare for the opening of the first Bolshevik Congress was the party historian M. N. Liadov, who, sixteen years later was to recreate the conspiratorial atmosphere surrounding this important event in the prose style of an old-fashioned tale of international intrigue and political double-dealing.² On April 25 (12), 1905, Liadov and

¹M. Liadov, "Tretii s"ezd RSDRP (1905 goda)," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 3, 1921, p. 62.

²Another delegate who became a party historian in later years was G. Kramol'nikov, whose study on the III Congress is included in 1905: Isotoriia revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v otdel'nykh ocherkakh, edited by M. N. Pokrovsky. Subsequently, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the III Congress, he contributed an article to Proletarskaia revoliutsiia about the first Bolshevik Congress in a somewhat more popular form. Along with the familiar presentation of the issues discussed at the Congress, this article sheds light on the conspiratorial and more humorous side of the business of revolution: Singly or two at a time, the delegates were to proceed to

Alekseev were joined by Lenin and some forty of his professional revolutionaries -- party organizers, traveling agitators, coordinators of Committee activities and pamphleteers--to prepare the tactical and organizational line which would guide the Russian working class in its struggle against tzarist autocracy. In the course of twenty-six sessions, filled with intensive deliberations, the theoretical foundation of Lenin's bourgeois-democratic revolution acquired its tactical superstructure. Now that the revolution was actually taking place, political concepts had to be translated into practical action.

Although party historians admit to the lack of complete unanimity that existed during the debates at the Congress, the most important tactical formulations, as conceived by Lenin, were actually accepted by all the delegates.

No agreement, of course, could have been possible with the Menshevik wing of the Party, whose basic political theories had become completely irreconcilable with those of the Bolsheviks. But,

St. Petersburg from their assigned localities and from there to Riga, Berlin and London. In the Russian capital their contact was the dentist Lavrent'ev, who was to answer their password "Down with Bonapartism" with "We are united in the party." After having crossed the frontier with the aid of professional border smugglers, the delegates had to reach Berlin, there to confront A. M. Essen, Piatnitsky, and Mysh with the password "Vom russischen Papst Leo den dreizehnten." Kramol'nikov could not help but wonder what effect such a statement would have on the wrong German. Once in London, the Russian Committeemen were to contact Alekseev and Liadov for lodging and general orientation in a foreign capital. (G. Kramol'nikov, "III s"ezd RSDRP, "Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 5(100), 1930, p. 28.)

we are told, it was mainly the Menshevik leadership abroad -- Plekhanov, Martov, Axelrod, Zaslulich, Dan -- that remained unyielding in its unrealistic estimation of the revolutionary situation and in its denial of the Leninist formulation of the character and class alignment of the revolution; the rank-and-file Menshevik party workers in Russia, on the other hand, had proved to have much in common with the Bolsheviks and had offered the hope that the Social Democratic Party might yet become reunited.³ The picture which party historians tried to present was one in which the III Congress, by virtue of its overwhelming endorsement by the revolutionary workers in Russia, really constituted a legitimate Social Democratic Party Congress.

The importance of the pre-history of the III Congress -- the intra-party struggle over the legality and mechanics of convening a Social Democratic Party Congress -- is strongly emphasized in Soviet histories and is very often shown to be the story of the birth of the Bolshevik Party.⁴

Soviet historians lead their readers back to August 1904, when Lenin and twenty-one of his closest associates met near Geneva to begin to set up a purely Bolshevik party center which would be free to act apart from the Menshevik-dominated governing bodies of the

³Liadov, op. cit., p. 63.

⁴For a debate by party historians on the beginnings of the Bolshevik party, see "Vokrug istpartovskoi raboty. Otchet o zasedanii soveta istparta," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 4, 1928. p. 220.

Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP). The immediate result of this conference was the issuing of the appeal "To the Party" in which is stated the platform of the Bolshevik faction. This "Declaration of the 22"⁵ was circulated among the Committees in Russia and served as the basic instrument that was to unify and give guidance to the scattered and confused Bolshevik agents engaged at that time in the dual struggle against autocracy and their fellow Social Democrats.

During the winter of 1904 the Bolsheviks were able to show their growing autonomy by organizing three Conferences -- the Southern, the Caucasian and the Northern -- which elected a Bureau of Committees of the Majority (BKB) to rival the pro-Menshevik and "conciliatory" Central Committee of the RSDLP and subsequently became the nucleus of an independent Bolshevik Party.⁶

⁵Among the 22 signatories were Lenin, Krupskaya, Bogdanov, Lunarcharsky, Ol'minsky, Lepeshinsky, Liadov, Desnitsky, M. M. Essen, Vorovsky, Zemliachka, Bonch-Bruевич, Velichkina, Gusev, Krasikov and seven others, whose names Liadov could not remember. An explanation for his lack of total recall may be found in M. Ol'minsky, "K voprosu ob istorii chastnogo soveshcheniia, Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, Nos. 2-3 (97-98), 1930, pp. 196-200, in which an attempt is made to reconstruct the circumstances of this meeting and recall the presence or absence of various signatories. Bertram Wolfe lists in addition: Lenin's sister, Lepeshinsky's wife, Lengnik, Knunians and his wife, Bauman, Stasova, Litvinov, and Rykov. (Three Who Made a Revolution, p. 263.)

⁶In a detailed article on the formation of the BKB ("K istorii zarozhdeniia 'Biuro Komitetov Bol'shinstva'", Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 1, 1930, pp. 47-67), Kardashev notes "that the establishment of an independent Bolshevik party in connection with the creation of an all-Russian center of Bolsheviks -- the Bureau of Committees of the Majority -- cannot be timed to a specific date: it was a long process of gathering and uniting Bolshevik forces which took more than a year (from the beginning of December 1903 to the end of December 1904)." (p. 47.)

This new organization, which included the topmost elite of the faction -- Lenin, Lunacharsky, Ol'minsky and Vorovsky, who were to reside abroad as editors of Vpered, and Maria Essen, Bogdanov, Liadov, Rumiantsev and Zemliachka, who were to work in Russia -- demanded the convocation of a Party Congress, a matter that had to be sanctioned formally by the Council of the Party. Here, the membership consisted of two representatives of the Central Organ Iskra (Martov and Axelrod), two members of the Central Committee (Deich, the "foreign representative" who had replaced Lenin, and Noskov, who "was entirely under the hypnosis of the Mensheviks") and, in the position of honorary chairman, the II Congress had elected Plekhanov. What better opportunity for analyzing the party struggle of 1905 could a party historian hope for?

Lenin's political maneuvering for the creation of a Bolshevik center, whose immediate task would be the convocation of a III Congress, formed the principal chapter in the story of the party struggle. In it were combined the ideological differences that had existed between Lenin and the leading Mensheviks since the II Congress as well as the efforts on the part of both factions to consolidate their organizational set-up and to assure the loyalty of their followers.⁷

⁷ See for instance: "Perepiska N. Lenina i N. K. Krupskoi s peterburgskoi organizatsiei, Noisabr' 1904 - Mai 1905, Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 3(38), 1925, pp. 9-45 and Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 4(39), 1925, pp. 12-40.

At times, party historians embellish their presentation of ideological differences with instances of underhanded methods used by the Mensheviks to obtain majorities in local party organizations and contrast their disgraceful behavior with the honest desires of the workers to support the Bolsheviks and the III Congress. (Liadov, op. cit., p. 64.)

The Bureau of Committees of the Majority proceeded to agitate for the convocation of a Party Congress by publishing its plans in an "Announcement" (Izveshchenie) prepared by Lenin, which listed the proposed topics to be discussed. In his study on the preparations for the Congress, Kramol'nikov emphasized the fact that the agents of the BKB who traveled around the country to agitate for the Congress fulfilled at the same time the historic task of coordinating and uniting the separate Bolshevik organizations and thus laid down the foundations for the construction of the first all-Russian Bolshevik Party.⁸

With the existence of a Menshevik-dominated Central Organ, Central Committee and Party Council, confronting a Bureau of Committees of the Majority and Lenin's newly launched newspaper Vpered, it was not difficult for Soviet historians to show that in fact the Social Democratic Party had already split irrevocably.⁹ However, they make it clear that the responsibility for aggravating the mutual hostility belonged to the Mensheviks "who insisted on using the situation for their own factional aims."¹⁰ The assertion about the finality of the break is somewhat contradicted by the official Soviet appellation of the Bolshevik gathering -- "The III Congress of the RSDLP" -- which suggests that it legally represented the entire party by virtue of its popular support. But party historians are only too happy to show that the best of both contentions can prevail: the Social Democratic Party

⁸G. Kramol'nikov, "III s"ezd partii," M. N. Pokrovskii (ed.), 1905; Istoriia revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v otchel'nykh ocherkakh (Moscow-Leningrad: Gos. izd., 1925-1927), II, 132.

⁹Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁰Ibid.

had for all practical purposes split in two, but it was the Bolshevik side that had attracted the majority of the rank-and-file Russian party worker and for that reason the III Congress legally represented the will of the entire Party.¹¹

The final chapter of the Bolshevik struggle for a Party Congress concerns the formal request for its convocation, which the Bolshevik Committee of St. Petersburg sent to the Central Committee of the Party on December 9, 1904. Little realizing the significance of the date, the Central Committee had asked for a month's time in order to deliberate the request. "The irony of history was such that on January 9, 1905 it was not the 'conciliatory' Central Committee who [answered] , but the fighting proletariat of Petersburg."¹²

We are made to realize, however, that not only did "history" magnify the urgent need for a Congress, but that it was primarily the agitational work of the BKB agents which resulted in rallying substantial support for it. By March, according to Liadov,¹³ 21 out of 28 Committees had accepted the BKB platform, and even the Central

¹¹Soviet historians of the 1905 Revolution continued to refer to the "Social Democratic Party" as it appeared in the documents and sources of the time, even when discussing purely Bolshevik activities. This often resulted in a lack of clarity which the context did not always resolve.

¹²Kramol'nikov, op. cit., p. 132.

¹³Liadov, op. cit., p. 64.

Committee was finally convinced of the fact that the majority of the members were in favor of a Congress. "Properly speaking, the Central Committee could do nothing else because that would have meant a complete break with the masses."¹⁴ By the middle of the month, an Organizational Committee, formed by both the Central Committee and the BKB,¹⁵ began the practical work to assemble the delegates and dispatch them to London, there to witness the first all-Bolshevik Party Congress.

Thus, by the spring of 1905, separate organizations and newspapers had been set up and now the ideological and physical break was confirmed with the announcement of two separate party conventions: the Bolshevik "III Congress of the RSDLP" and the Menshevik "First All-Russian Conference of Party Workers."

¹⁴p. O. Gorin, "Iz istorii bor'by Lenina za III s"ezd," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 5(100), 1930, p. 23. The explanation given by a Western historian for the Central Committee's acquiescence is much more direct: "In February 1905 the Russian police played into Lenin's hands by a wholesale arrest of nine of the eleven members of the Central Committee. The two members who remained at liberty, L. B. Krasin and A. I. Liubimov, were now more inclined to support Lenin's plan to call a Congress, if only to recreate a representative party organ inside Russia. This now seemed particularly urgent as Russia was in the throes of revolution." (L. Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, p. 59.) Pavel Gorin mentions the arrest in passing but dwells with greater emphasis upon the fact that the CC by now could have done nothing else but bow to the desire of the masses.

¹⁵The Soviet reader is assured that the cooperation between the CC and the BKB was only a temporary arrangement "and did not exclude a further energetic struggle by the Bolsheviks to expose conciliators and Mensheviks." (Gorin, Ibid., p. 23.)

And it was a curious thing: from one and the same town two delegates were going; both were elected to a congress; both found themselves in one and the same place; but having crossed the border, one made his official appearance....in London, while the other headed for Geneva....¹⁶

In the Marxist-Leninist scheme of history the bourgeois-democratic Revolution of 1905 typified the first step to socialism; in the history of the Communist Party, 1905 was the year when Lenin's tactical and organization preparations for that revolution united his followers into a separate Bolshevik Party and toughened them for the eventual proletarian revolution of 1917.

¹⁶Liadov, op. cit., p. 62.

The Formulation of Tactics

In the studies made on the III Party Congress by the Soviet historians of the 1920's, the theoretical basis for all tactical and organizational plans continued to be Lenin's formulation of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, led to its conclusion by the proletariat and destined to grow over into socialism.

This was the first Congress of the Bolsheviks [which met] during the days of the First Russian Revolution -- that dress rehearsal for October -- and placed before the Party in all its magnitude the task of preparing the proletariat for the role of avant-garde and leader of the revolution. The resolutions of the first Bolshevik Congress gave the Party of the proletariat the directives to fight for the role of leader in the people's revolution, to achieve the fighting union of the proletariat and the revolutionary peasantry

The Congress resembled less than anything a parliament and more than anything a war council of the staff of the proletarian army. The Congress gave the basic strategic aim: to proceed to the conquest of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, not forgetting that this is only a stage in the struggle for the socialist dictatorship of the working class.¹⁷

Pavel Gorin begins his essay on Lenin's struggle for the III Congress with the latter's famous statement: "Without a revolutionary theory there cannot be a revolutionary movement."¹⁸ And now, this political theory had to be related directly to the bloody events of January 9 in St. Petersburg and the subsequent history of the Russian Revolution of 1905.

¹⁷G. Kramol'nikov, "III s"ezd RSDRP," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 5(100), 1930, p. 25.

¹⁸Gorin, op. cit., p. 10.

The result of this mixture of theory and reality is best illustrated by listing the major tactical and organizational problems discussed at the III Congress. On the agenda were the following topics: Under "Tactical Problems" were listed 1) armed uprising; 2) the provisional revolutionary government; 3) the attitude to the policies of the government on the eve and during the revolution; 4) open political action; 5) the attitude toward the peasant movement. "Organizational Problems" included 1) the Statutes of the Party and 2) the relationship between workers and intellectuals in the Party organizations. As separate issues were listed "The relations with other parties and movements," and "Intra-party problems."¹⁹

Let us examine the major tactical and organizational plans formulated at the III Congress, see how they were carried out by the party workers in Russia and discover what problems this confrontation of theory and practice presented to Soviet historians.

By the time the Congress opened, armed uprising was already an acknowledged fact. The massacre of January 9 in St. Petersburg and the evident desire by the proletariat to retaliate dramatized their need for an effective leadership and practical planning for future uprisings. The first two reports given at the Congress concerned just this problem -- the theoretical and practical aspects of

¹⁹Kramol'nikov, op. cit., p. 141.

armed uprising -- and were presented to the delegates by Lunacharsky and Bogdanov. Lunarcharsky himself let it be known that although he had made the formal report to the Congress, the theoretical ideas concerning armed uprising were Lenin's.²⁰

The ramifications of the slogan of armed uprising were so extensive that party historians have viewed it as the very heart of Bolshevik tactics in the Revolution of 1905. While the theoretical basis for a correct understanding of the Revolution was a knowledge of its character and goal, the basis for understanding Bolshevik tactics in that revolution was the acceptance of armed uprisings, organized and led by the Social Democrats, as the means to achieve that goal. The reports and debates concerning this problem touched upon all the issues brought forth by the revolution: the role of the party as organizer and leader of the revolutionary forces, the inter-relationship of mass spontaneity and political consciousness, the significance of political strikes as the prologue to armed uprising, and, going through all these issues "like a red thread," it was the slogan of armed uprising emblazoned on its banner that distinguished the Bolsheviks from the other opposition parties as the only party with an effective plan to carry the bourgeois revolution to the end. After

²⁰"Vladimir Il'ich had given me all the basic theses of the report. ...In spite of my habit never to write down any of my speeches, but rather to improvise when I speak, he asked that I write down my entire speech this time and give it to him to read in advance. On the night before the meeting at which my report was to be presented, Vladimir

reading Soviet party histories, one is often left with the impression that only the Bolsheviks agitated and prepared for armed uprising and that the revolution could stand or fall only in relation to the correct implementation of a popular uprising.

Lunacharsky began his report by attacking the concept embodied in the Menshevik adage "revolution is not made, revolution is a spontaneous phenomenon, not dependent upon the will of any leader or political party." Spontaneous opposition to the government was being expressed by all classes in Russian society, he told the Congress, especially as a result of the tsarist defeats in the Japanese War. The Liberals gathered at political banquets and expressed their dissatisfaction with tsarism in the form of radical speeches and resolutions and found support even among the industrial bourgeoisie. Far removed from them socially, the peasants too were expressing their discontent spontaneously by outright acts of violence in the countryside. But to the Bolsheviks the most alarming revelation was the obvious lack of political consciousness and leadership with which the workers had followed Father Gapon to the Winter Palace.

Party textbooks and studies on Bolshevik tactics during the 1905 Revolution point out the two opposing, but quite predictable,

Il'ich in a most attentive way read through my manuscript and returned it with two or three insignificant corrections, which was not surprising, because as far as I remember, my speech was the result of the precise directions of Vladimir Il'ich." (A. V. Lunacharskii, "Bol'sheviki v 1905 g." Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 11(46), 1925, p.54.

conclusions drawn by the two factions of the Social Democratic Party as a result of "Bloody Sunday." The Mensheviks were shown to favor the spontaneous process of revolutionary action as an end in itself, while the Bolsheviks realized that there was a need to organize the elemental forces of discontent and place its own party leadership at the head -- not at the tail -- of the workers' movement.

The armed struggle of the masses against tsarism, a fact since the first days of the Russian Revolution, forced the Mensheviks to speak of uprising also -- but they never approached uprising as an art, they never understood that the consciousness of the avant-garde must go in front of the spontaneous masses.²¹

Soviet historians try to show that theoretically Lenin had already foreseen the eventual need for uprising "long before the beginning of the revolution,"²² but that tactically,

....the views of Lenin on armed uprising developed with the course of the revolution itself, parallel with the development of revolutionary events....Uprising was not something thought up as bookish tactics and strategy -- it arose from the spontaneous struggle of the masses themselves. The call to uprising was not a far-fetched slogan, it was merely a generalization of the unfolding spontaneous form of struggle.²³

The revolutionary spontaneity of the Russian proletariat was consistently presented by Soviet historians as a positive phenomenon and was reflected in their writings by expressions of profound

²¹V. Bystrianskii, "Lenin kak teoretik vooruzhennogo vosstania v pervoi russkoi burzhuaznoi revoliutsii 1905-1907 gg." Krasnaia letopis', No. 4(15), 1925, p. 14.

²²Ibid., p. 6.

²³Ibid., p. 8.

admiration. Yet, spontaneity alone was not enough. It had to be guided into the proper revolutionary channels by skilled party workers who were to enrich this elemental mass movement by the "introduction of consciousness and planning...."²⁴

Should the Social Democratic Party limit itself to simple agitation when the spontaneous revolutionary movement starts? [Liadov asks] Or should it try to develop the revolution, organize it and lead it to the end? The Social Democratic Party is the conscious avant-garde of the entire working class. The working class, by virtue of its position as the most consistently revolutionary class, inevitably becomes the leader of the nation-wide movement. Therefore it is our duty to come forward with a plan for the preparation of the working class, for a mass political strike which inevitably must result in armed uprising.²⁵

The two reports on armed uprising made it clear that the party organizations were to accept the obligation of arming the rebelling workers, of representing the nucleus of a revolutionary army and of working out the strategic plans for this revolutionary army.

A. A. Bogdanov's report on the practical problems of militant Bolshevism dealt with the formation of fighting squads, the acquisition, collection and distribution of weapons and ammunition, and most practical of all, methods of agitation within the Russian armed forces in an effort to bring soldiers and arms to the side of the revolutionary population.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Liadov, op. cit., p. 67.

²⁶ E. Iaroslavskii, (ed.), Istoriia VKP(b) (Moscow-Leningrad: Gos. izd., 1930), II, p. 252.

Bogdanov's report also showed that already in the spring of 1905 the Bolsheviki understood the real meaning of a political strike: only in connection with armed uprising, only as a starting point for uprising, does it play a practical role in the revolution. It is during the course of a general strike that the revolutionary elements of society are mobilized for armed uprising.²⁷

Nearly all the delegates present at the Congress participated in the discussions which followed the two reports and elaborated still further the practical implementations of Lenin's new directives: Was the working class ready for an uprising? Should the masses be armed indiscriminately, or only those showing greater initiative? Should all the revolutionary forces be concentrated in a few places, or is it more important to achieve a nation-wide uprising? How should money be obtained? How should information, agitation and propaganda be disseminated?²⁸ The delegates had good reason to be worried, for the revolutionary mood of the workers varied from place to place; only in the Caucasus had a really popular armed uprising taken place and even there the proper proletarian leadership had been lacking. The response to these conditions was greater organization, agitation and practical leadership:

Heretofore the Social Democrats had gone to the workers principally as 'educators'-propagandists, agitators. Now the Social Democrats must be first of all organizers, the fighting leaders of the masses. This does not mean a stop

²⁷Ibid., p. 431.

²⁸Ibid., p. 431, 433.

to agitation. On the contrary, both Lunacharsky and Bogdanov emphasized that the preparation for armed uprising demands by itself a huge increase in the cadres of agitators and propagandists and that at the moment of uprising, more will be demanded of them, and that on the presence of a sufficiently large staff will depend, to a significant degree, the extent and consciousness of the movement itself.²⁹

Taking into consideration the revolutionary situation in Russia and the leading role in it of the party of the proletariat, the III Congress took the following resolution concerning armed uprising:

"a) to explain to the proletariat by means of propaganda and agitation not only the political significance, but also the practical organizational side of the forthcoming armed uprising; b) to explain by way of propaganda and agitation the role of the mass political strike which can have great importance in the beginning of the uprising and in the course of the uprising itself; c) to take the most energetic measures to arm the proletariat, and also to create wherever necessary special groups of party workers for the planning of armed uprisings and direct leadership.³⁰

"We are happy to say that no disagreements in principle were disclosed concerning this problem at our Congress," Liadov declared. The resolution on armed uprising was accepted unanimously.³¹

Theoretically, at least, the delegates knew what was expected of them when the next spontaneous or incited uprising should break out. We shall subsequently have occasion to examine Soviet historical writings on the effectiveness of these tactics on the field of battle.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

³⁰ Liadov, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

³¹ Iaroslavskii, *op. cit.*, p. 432. The authors point out that only Postalovsky objected to the principles stated in the reports on uprising.

Rumiantsev, one of the Bolshevik leaders who had been active in the St. Petersburg Committee at the time of the Shidlovsky Commission, presented the report on the Party's attitude toward the tactics of the government during the revolution. This report did not limit itself to the subject indicated by its title, but dwelled in detail on Social Democratic relations with the Liberals and the need for party workers to participate in open political action. Rumiantsev told the delegates how the Liberals, having taken advantage of the political "spring" under Sviatopolk-Mirsky had come out openly for reforms and had thereby acquired a favorable "image" among the masses -- a benefit the Social Democrats would be unable to surpass as long as they remained underground. The Liberals had been organizing themselves into powerful professional unions and were now pursuing a lively campaign for a future parliament. So far, the Social Democrats had offered the masses nothing as an alternative, Rumiantsev pointed out. In the meantime, under the increasing pressures of the revolution itself, the political consciousness of the workers was growing and had become ready for a more appropriate leadership. Now was the time for the Social Democrats to come out openly in the interests of the working class -- to promote the class demands of the proletariat in opposition to the general democratic reforms sponsored by the Liberals.

The working class must oppose reforms with revolution, liberal conciliation with decisive action for proletarian demands, and, in the first place -- the revolutionary

convocation of a freely elected Constituent Assembly on the broadest democratic basis. All the tactics in our open actions must endeavor to show the working masses that by the peaceful road they will achieve nothing.³²

While the discussions that had followed the reports on armed uprising revolved around matters of practical details, the debates resulting from Rumiantsev's speech showed that the delegates were divided first of all on a question of principle. "Opposition from the 'left'" was voiced by a group of delegates who feared that legal or semi-legal activities carried on by the Party would distract the workers from the revolutionary struggle and encourage them to participate in a peaceful movement.³³ Lenin tried to calm their fears by saying that the kind of legal work that should be carried on must depend on the prevailing circumstances. Thus, he explained that to take part in a liberal parliament, for instance, was not envisaged at the present, but to make use of the election campaign to further the demands of the workers and to expose the fraud of the Liberals, should be an acceptable tactic.

The discussions following Rumiantsev's report showed that many provincial praktiki did not understand the ideas contained in Lenin's 'New Tasks and New Forces,' on the need for a sharp break in all party work toward a wider range of work involving the Social Democratic influence on millions, as well as the preservation of a conspiratorial apparatus.³⁴

³²Lidov, op. cit., p. 70.

³³Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 435.

³⁴Ibid.

Thus, unlike the Menshevik leaders who wanted to legalize the entire Party -- who wanted "to renounce the underground, and without a rudder and without a sail give themselves up to the waves of amorphous 'broad organizations'" -- Lenin convinced his followers that the simultaneous use of both legal and illegal revolutionary methods would be of far greater advantage. The Party was not to give up its old underground organizational structure; the change would affect only the now outmoded conspiratorial methods of reaching the masses, and it was this "break" in tactics that caused understandable confusion among the delegates. As a result of the differences of opinion, four counterproposals and a number of amendments were made to the resolution of Rumiantsev. It was finally necessary for a conciliation commission to compose two resolutions which were acceptable to all: one concerned "the attitude toward the government on the eve of the revolution," and the second one, worked out by Lenin, was entitled "On the open action of the RSDLP."³⁵

Now the delegates could bring back to their local party organizations the following tactical directives: The Party's attitude toward the government demanded that the party workers expose the reactionary aims of the government's concessions, that they emphasize by means of propaganda and agitation the fact that these concessions were made under pressure of the revolutionary events as well as the fact that it is absolutely impossible to expect the government to formulate

³⁵Ibid.

reforms that could satisfy the workers. The party workers were to make use of the pre-election campaign to explain to the proletariat the truth about the government's measures and to show them the necessity for the convocation by revolutionary means of a Constituent Assembly on the basis of general, equal, direct and secret balloting. The party workers should organize the proletariat for the immediate realization of the 8-hour day and other workers' demands. They should organize armed defense against the Black Hundreds and other reactionary elements organized by the government. The resolution on open political action contained the following three tactical instructions:

"a) to make use of every opportunity for open action to oppose the general democratic demands of the independent classes with the demands of the proletariat, in order to organize it in the course of such action into an independent social-democratic force; b) to make use of all legal and semi-legal workers' societies, unions and other organizations for securing in them the predominant influence of the Social Democrats and to turn them as much as possible into bases for a future open Social Democratic workers' party in Russia; c) to take all measures so that our party organization, together with preserving and developing its conspiratorial apparatus begins to prepare expedient ways of making the transition to open Social Democratic activities wherever possible, not stopping in this even in the face of clashes with the armed forces of the state."³⁶

Rumiantsev's report dealt with the Social Democratic attitude toward the tsarist government on the eve of the revolution, but Lenin had reserved for himself the presentation of the official attitude toward the government during the revolution itself. This was the all-important report on the Provisional Revolutionary

³⁶Ibid.

Government which many party historians singled out as the climax of the Congress. Yet, as we recall, the ideas concerning armed uprising and open political action, though worked out in the reports of others, were primarily the formulations of Lenin also. Indeed, it was the inter-relationship, the sum total, of these three reports which served not only as the principal tactical guidelines for the party workers in Russia, but was also seen by party historians as the skillfully composed forecast by Lenin of the events which did, in fact, take place during the fall and winter of 1905: the General Strike of October, the emergence and activities of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, and the December armed uprisings.

In their appraisal of Lenin's report on the III Congress, Soviet historians were able to present their readers with a discussion on the most dramatic point of controversy that divided the Social Democratic Party: the problem of the seizure of power.

Lenin had based his report on a refutation of the ideas contained in Martynov's Two Dictatorships. Both Lenin and the Soviet historians found ample opportunity to ridicule the Menshevik fear of a successful armed uprising. If the Bolshevik plans for armed uprising were to succeed, the Mensheviks reasoned, the Social Democrats would be faced with the misfortune of having to accept power prematurely, for the class which it represented -- the proletariat -- was not yet ready to rule the country. Once in power, the socialists, still true to their cherished ideals, would find themselves enacting a program incompatible with the "primitive east-Asiatic productive basis" of Russia. In the Menshevik conceptual framework, the Revolution of 1905

was a bourgeois revolution similar to the Great French Revolution, and it was inconceivable to them that any class other than the bourgeoisie could play a leading role in it or eventually take power. Over-eagerness to carry out a revolution on the part of the Social Democrats would only frighten the bourgeoisie; they would "recoil" from the revolution and be forced into an alliance with reaction too soon, "and thus weaken the sweep of the revolution."

In paraphrasing Lenin's rebuttal to Martynov's Two Dictatorships, party historians could effectively reenact the fateful confrontation between Menshevism and Bolshevism, highlighting all its interlocking ideological elements. Kramol'nikov composed a handy outline of nine refutations made by Lenin against the ideas of Martynov:

- 1) the bourgeoisie is not so much "frightened," but there are socialists who are afraid of the ghost of a frightened Liberal;
- 2) the Mensheviks do not have a materialistic but a fatalistic concept of the historical process;
- 3) the Mensheviks debase the role of the Jacobins in the revolution of 1789 when they depict the big bourgeoisie in the role of the principal driving force in the Great French Revolution;
- 4) when Martynov and Martov and a little later also Plekhanov depicted the progression of class forces (first the big bourgeoisie, then the petty-bourgeoisie and finally the proletariat), they undeniably demonstrated that the "old, vulgar Economism, with its theory of stages, is alive, and, personified by the Mensheviks, celebrates its victory;"
- 5) one must analyze the present-day situation correctly in order to understand the fact that the peasant can and must take the land and be in a political union

with the leader of the revolution -- the proletariat. Thus, there are two political blocs: on the one hand, the bourgeoisie and land-owners, and on the other, the proletariat and peasantry; 6) the range of the revolution would be immensely greater if the peasants were free from their political allegiance to the Liberals and this would certainly take place if the bourgeoisie did in fact "recoil" from the revolution; 7) the political bloc of the proletariat and peasantry, if it gains complete -- not half-way -- victory, cannot but lead to the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry; 8) independent of this, the Bolsheviki must take part in the provisional government in order to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry; 9) it goes without saying that no matter what the make up of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, it is necessary to exert constant pressure on this government by the armed proletariat.³⁷

Summing up the report and discussions on the provisional government, Kramol'nikov wrote:

The leitmotif of the whole resolution on the Provisional Revolutionary Government is the appeal to give scope to the revolutionary energy of the masses, the appeal not to fear the complete victory of the masses, the appeal to strengthen this struggle for the achievement of the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry."³⁸

The resolution drawn up as a result of Lenin's report specified the conditions under which the Social Democrats would participate in a Provisional Revolutionary Government:

³⁷Kramol'nikov, Op. cit., pp. 143-144.

³⁸Ibid., p. 149.

The necessary conditions for such participation are the strict control of the Party over its representatives and the constant safeguarding of the independence of the Social Democratic Party which strives for the complete socialist revolution and consequently is irreconcilably opposed to all the bourgeois parties.³⁹

The resolution assigned to the Social Democrats participating in the Provisional Revolutionary Government the specific duty of exerting continuous pressure upon it in order "to defend, consolidate and extend the gains of the revolution." This method of struggle was depicted once again most dramatically in the language of the French Revolution. The "Jacobin" dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry and the Provisional Revolutionary Government must be prepared to face a civil war:

"We must not forget," said Lenin, "that even if we seize Petersburg and guillotine Nicholas we would still have before us a sizeable Vendée. Marx said in 1848: the Terror of 1793 is nothing more than the plebeian method of having done with absolutism and counterrevolution.... We also want to do it this way and leave to 'Iskra' the methods of the Gironde."⁴⁰

The limited objectives stated in the Menshevik resolution on a provisional government, "We must act only as a party which criticizes every government, as a party of the extreme left opposition," provided

³⁹The resolution was read by Krasin. Trotsky had suggested in his autobiography My Life that the ideas concerning the Provisional Revolutionary Government were really his own, for he had discussed the matter with Krasin some time before the opening of the Congress. Party historians emphatically deny that either Trotsky or Krasin had contributed anything to the formulation of this resolution: the ideas were those of Lenin alone. (Iaroslavsky, op. cit., p. 433.) According to Gorin, Trotsky also appropriated Lenin's ideas on armed uprising which he also allegedly discussed with Krasin beforehand. (Gorin, op. cit., p. 23.)

⁴⁰Liadov, op. cit., p. 72.

Soviet historians with the finest opportunity to clinch the juxtaposition of the Bolshevik and Menshevik points of view:

The resolution of the Bolsheviks, [Lenin said,] expresses the psychology of active struggle, the other one is an example of sickly moralization.⁴¹

With plans for the proletariat in the unfolding revolution taken care of, the delegates to the III Congress turned to the peasants and their future. Once more, it was Lenin who presented the report on the theoretical aspect of the problem and it was the well-known Caucasian Bolshevik Mikha Tskhakaia -- the oldest delegate present at the Congress -- who delivered the report on the practical measures to be taken. The revolutionary movement in the Caucasus was primarily a peasant movement led by local strong-men; it was spontaneous, violent, and romantically heroic. The Social Democratic Committeemen and women stationed in the few larger cities desperately needed concrete tactical directives from the leaders abroad, for they had been unsuccessful so far in sharing their own political consciousness with either the workers or the peasants among whom they had agitated.⁴² Yet, in spite of this, the Bolsheviks were proud of their involvement in the Caucasian uprisings and were deeply moved by the dazzling brilliance of the wild peasant revolts.

Just as they were prepared to support all other revolutionary movements against the existing tsarist regime, the Bolsheviks resolved to support the peasants in their struggle for the general

⁴¹Kramol'nikov, op. cit., p. 150.

⁴²V. Taratuta, "Kanun revoliutsii 1905 goda na Kavkaze," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 1(48), 1926, pp. 210-216.

improvement of their lot, "up to the confiscation of the land." The basic tactical slogan of the Party -- the immediate Social Democratic task in the countryside -- was the formation of revolutionary peasant committees. But, remembering the class divisions in the rural areas

...the Party did not for a moment forget the contradiction within the peasantry itself, the dual nature of the peasantry, and in the resolution attention is paid to the question of the organization of the rural proletariat for the defense of their special interests.⁴³

In the resolution this distinction between the rural proletariat and the rural bourgeoisie is clearly expressed:

...Social Democracy, as the Party of the proletariat, must in all cases and under all circumstances steadfastly strive for the independent organization of the rural proletariat and explain to them the irreconcilable contrast of their⁴⁴ interests and the interests of the peasant bourgeoisie...

Thus, as in the case of the resolutions on armed uprising and the Provisional Revolutionary Government, theory and tactics are kept closely tied to each other, eventually to reach their successful practical denouement in 1917.

The Bolshevnik differences with the Mensheviks on the peasants' role in the revolution, and consequently, their differences concerning the attitude of the Social Democrats toward the peasant movement, were so basic and so self-evident that little time was spent by Soviet historians in contrasting the two views. A short summation was sufficient:

⁴³Kramol'nikov, op. cit., p. 157.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 157.

In their resolution, the Mensheviks completely reflect their underestimation of the peasant movement. In order to study the role of the Mensheviks, one must take into account the fact that they had placed the urban bourgeois democrat higher than peasant democracy and -- more than that -- they had based all their hopes for making political use of the peasants on the degree of the "civilizing" role and influence of the bourgeoisie, the bourgeois city on the village. Since the peasant had not been drawn into the sphere of "bourgeois-progressive" influence, the insurgent countryside appeared to the Mensheviks as a potential Russian Vendee.⁴⁵

In contrast, the Bolshevik resolution called for "the introduction of political consciousness into the peasant movement" by Social Democrats as part of the campaign for organizing the peasantry and preparing it for union with the proletariat.⁴⁶

With the acceptance of the resolution on the peasant movement, the III Congress concluded its deliberations on tactics and began to discuss organizational problems. For the purpose of analyzing the Soviet interpretation of the 1905 Revolution -- an interpretation that shows a direct relationship between political theory, tactics and revolutionary action -- most of the organizational problems discussed at the Congress are of comparatively little relevance. However, two items listed in that part of the agenda bear unmistakable tactical overtones and do help to understand more clearly the character of local party activities at the time of the 1905 Revolution: the discussion on the relationship between workers and intellectuals in the Bolshevik party committees, and the decision to cooperate with the Socialist Revolutionaries in fighting tsarism.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 159.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 158.

Soviet studies about the III Congress try to leave the impression that in spite of the differences voiced by some delegates during the debates on matters of tactics, the resolutions eventually drawn up were unanimously supported by all present -- in the best tradition of "democratic centralism." But, Liadov related,

....the almost complete unanimity on the most important questions of tactics was somewhat broken when the Congress went into organizational problems. The debates took on a more passionate character. A definite grouping took place of theoreticians and practical people, literary people and committeemen, people from abroad and Russian praktiki.⁴⁷

The excitement of the delegates was aroused by Bogdanov's report on the relationship between the workers and the intellectuals in the Social Democratic organizations which brought to the fore the unbalanced make-up of the local party structure. The fact that only one worker-delegate had been sent to the III Congress and that a Bolshevik party committee as firmly established as the one in St. Petersburg should only recently have decided to co-opt its first worker after fifteen years of revolutionary involvement, proved to Lenin and Bogdanov that the ties between the professional revolutionaries and the very people they had been assigned to lead were of a dangerously tenuous character. Most of the Committeemen, on the other hand, feared that an influx of politically inexperienced and ideologically uneducated workers with "incorrect criteria" would weaken the doctrinal purity of revolutionary Marxism. Furthermore,

⁴⁷ Liadov, op. cit., p. 75.

they felt that under an autocratic regime, too much party democracy would be self-defeating. The Mensheviks had made good use of this anti-democratic attitude on the part of the Bolsheviks and had begun to spread the idea among the workers that the intellectuals had placed themselves "over" the workers, to be their "guardians." Sometimes the Mensheviks had even managed to convince the workers that the intellectuals were their enemies. Thus, while party historians were able to add to the list of Menshevik sins the anti-intellectual deviation of Makhaevism, they could not deny that the Bolshevik Committees did in fact lack a democratic base -- for this was the position taken by Lenin at the III Congress. For good measure, they were able to add self-righteously:

It was characteristic that in their organizations the Mensheviks took practically no steps toward democracy themselves.⁴⁸

And so, Soviet historians loyally supported Lenin by asserting that the Bolshevik praktiki had gone too far and that it really was time to bring into the Committees "authoritative worker-leaders, otherwise it would be difficult to avoid the loss of contact with the masses."⁴⁹

By the late 1920's, party historians could make good use of the fact that some of Lenin's opponents on this issue had now become officially unpopular figures in the Soviet Union. Rykov, Kamenev and Desnitsky had come out against a change in the make-up of the local

⁴⁸ Jaroslavsky, op. cit., p. 438.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 439.

Committees and the Soviet student of party politics is given a vivid demonstration of the fact that already in 1905 Lenin had to face the formidable opposition of confirmed deviationists:

The problem of the relationship between workers and intellectuals in party organizations doesn't even exist, said Kamenev, beginning the discussion. (Lenin: "It does exist!") No, it does not, it exists only as a demagogic problem. Kamenev was opposed to any kind of resolution on this problem....⁵⁰

....But this time Vladimir Il'ich remained in the minority: the resolution on the relationship between workers and intellectuals was rejected by the komitetchiki...⁵¹

Party historians thus prepare us for the realization that in spite of Lenin's efforts to strengthen the intellectuals' ties with the workers and in spite of his advice to bring more workers into local decision-making bodies, the Bolshevik Committeemen in Russia had rejected his recommendations and were thus compelled to face a revolutionary situation from a dangerously isolated position.

The second organizational problem that carried with it tactical overtones concerned a temporary alliance with the Socialist Revolutionaries (SR). The debates on this issue were entangled with the attempts to delineate Bolshevik relations with the Liberals. Some delegates felt that one resolution dealing with both the Liberals and the SR's would be sufficient since they saw little difference between the two political groups: radical Liberals and cautious SR's, they felt, were interchangeable. They also suggested

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 440.

that the SR's really had no significant influence on the masses. This was wrong, party historians point out. Such a view credits the Liberals with too much radicalism and ignores the fact that the SR's did "up to December compete successfully with the Social Democrats."⁵²

In the end, the resolution that was accepted emphasized that it was the duty of the party to "expose the treacherousness and perfidy of Liberals of all colors and styles." Particularly, it stressed the need to fight "against all attempts by bourgeois democrats to take the workers' movement into their hands and to act in the name of the proletariat or its separate groups."⁵³

A carefully worded statement allowed for a temporary arrangement with the Socialist Revolutionaries "for the purpose of fighting autocracy. Such a fighting agreement could be made only under the control of the [Bolshevik] Central Committee and in no case would it 'limit the independence of the Social Democratic Party or the purity of its proletarian tactics and its principles.'"⁵⁴

⁵²Ibid., p. 437.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

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CHAPTER IV

BOLSHEVIK THEORIES AND TACTICS IN ACTION

The Soviet Approach to the Narrative History of 1905

We have examined the Soviet interpretation of the theories and tactics which Lenin and his closest collaborators had formulated in connection with the Bourgeois-democratic Revolution of 1905. The ideological continuity that Soviet historians perceived between theory and tactics is not difficult to delineate: The doctrine of the hegemony of the proletariat was directly converted into the tactical directives concerned with the organization, planning and practical leadership, by the workers' party, of the spontaneous outbreaks which now had to be turned into effective armed uprisings.

The peasant, as the worker's principal ally in the bourgeois-democratic revolution, was to become politically conscious by means of the agitation and propaganda of the Social Democratic Party whose specific task was the establishment of revolutionary peasant committees in the countryside. In addition, the class distinctions within the peasantry were kept in mind by the tacticians who had provided for the special interests of the rural proletariat. The political concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" found its

tactical formulation in the slogans for the establishment and functions of a Provisional Revolutionary Government.

Let us continue to follow the Soviet historians in their treatment of the revolutionary events themselves and in their presentation of the actual consequences of Bolshevik theories and tactics -- for it will become evident that in this connection too the fundamental ideological continuity is not interrupted.

The great advantage of the Social Democrats over other parties was that its Bolshevik wing entered the first revolution with the correct revolutionary theories.¹

The undeniable correctness of Lenin's ideas, justified by the victory of 1917, gave Soviet historians of 1905 that sense of anticipatory satisfaction enjoyed by those who know beforehand that in the end their cause will prevail. It was the existence of this reassuring, Leninist ideology which provided Soviet party historians with the freedom to discuss without embarrassment the first disappointing consequences of Bolshevik tactics.

The inseparability of Russia's three revolutions was never forgotten by Soviet historians, and although the failure of the first, in December 1905, represented a temporary set-back for the forces of revolution, it was seen primarily as the first meaningful trial of revolutionary theory and tactics in preparation for the decisive battles of 1917. The Revolution of 1905 offered both an opportunity to experiment with revolutionary ideas and methods, and a time for the participants to "rehearse" their role in the greater drama of a future revolution.

¹V. Astrov, "Sotsial-demokratia pered revoliutsiei 1905 g.," 1905: Istoriia revoliutsionnogo dvizhenia v otchel'nykh ocherkakh, ed. by M. N. Pokrovky (Moscow-Leningrad: Gos. izd., 1925-1927), II, p. 124.

There were no breaks between our three revolutions, said Pokrovsky....The same avant-garde, the same party, those same Bolsheviks who were there in 1905 -- the same ones -- were also there in 1917.²

And now, in the 1920's, when some of "those same Bolsheviks" had become party historians, it was no wonder that they should so generously distribute to their readers the benefits of historical hindsight and show them how diligently the participants of the 1905 Revolution were learning their lessons, how they were preparing themselves, hardening themselves for a future and more important confrontation between the oppressed Russian people and a worn-out tsarist autocracy.

The lack of finality in the failure of the Revolution of 1905 and the knowledge that Lenin's political theories were to endure, made it easier for the Soviet historians to present facts that otherwise would have tarnished the glory of Bolshevik accomplishments. And so, the projection of historical hindsight on the events of 1905 -- the foreknowledge of a Bolshevik victory in October 1917 -- frees the Soviet historian from concealing or falsifying many an unpleasant event and provides the ever suspicious Western reader with a measure of confidence in the credibility of the Soviet narrative.

This is not to say that everything Soviet historians wrote concerning the events of 1905 must be accepted as the unbiased interpretation of uncommitted observers. Especially in matters relating to the party struggle -- old and new -- Soviet historians consistently presented their analysis in terms of "good" and "bad." It is rather in the presentation of Bolshevik weaknesses and lack of preparation for a

²M. N. Pokrovskii, "Nachalo proletarskoi revoliutsii v Rossii," Krasnyi arkhiv, XI-XII, 1925, p. vii.

decisive and victorious battle against autocracy in 1905 that we find Soviet historians surprisingly relaxed and even at times prepared to see the humor in the fumbling and clumsy activities of revolutionary beginners. They write in the style of older and wiser men who reminisce about their youth and the days when the entire proletarian movement was still in its infancy. Speaking of the fact that the Moscow workers had done nothing more than participate in peaceful demonstrations until December 1905, Pokrovsky remarks:

This is not in the least offensive for the Moscow workers: as there is nothing offensive for a grown up man to be reminded that he was once a small boy. To present the Russian working class as being all the time during the whole period of the first revolution on the same topmost level of revolutionary consciousness would mean in the first place rejecting Marxist dialectics; and secondly it would make it impossible to understand why it took twelve years to overthrow Nicholas II and not twelve weeks.³

Not only are we assured that it is natural to reminisce without a feeling of inferiority, but it is also dialectically justified.

A definite change in the narrative style, combined with a greater display of enthusiasm for the subject, takes place when Soviet historians leave theory and tactics behind and turn to the story of 1905 itself. Instead of the close, and sometimes sole, dependence on Lenin's pronouncements or the minutes of the III Congress, the historians find their sources in the reports and recollections of rank-and-file participants -- both rebel and tsarist. To repeat, ideology is not suddenly thrown out of the window. Political rivals, though less ominously cast, are still on the scene hampering and bungling the carefully planned tactics of the Bolsheviks, and the incisive words of Lenin can still be evoked

³M. N. Pokrovsky, Brief History of Russia, trans. D. S. Mirsky (London: Martin Lawrence Ltd., 1933), II, p. 193.

to reprimand them. But in contrast to the studies dealing with theoretical matters, where the writings and speeches of the political leaders are analyzed, Soviet historians are now more concerned with the activities and opinions of the rank-and-file party workers of both factions as well as representatives of other parties and the workers themselves. Here, as Soviet historians have already pointed out, party workers found much in common with their political counterparts in their struggle against tsarism. We are now in the more accessible realm of human relations and personal experience. As the year 1905 moved closer to its October, the involvement of ever greater masses of people in events of major significance to Soviet history resulted in the appearance of a historical narrative literature that was free from the artificialities of theoretical sophistication.

In the winter of 1924, when party historians were immersed in preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the 1905 Revolution, M. N. Pokrovsky issued an appeal to the readers of Proletarskaia revoliutsiia for help in finding the underlying causes, as well as the interrelationship between causes and effects, of the turbulent events of the first Russian revolution.

How was the October Strike prepared? he wanted to know Right now, from our present information, we have a collection of accidental circumstances. The Moscow printers went on strike, then the Moscow bakers, then the railroad mechanics and foremen. At the same time, when the railroads struck, the printers had already stopped striking. Why did all this add up to October 1905? What changes occurred between July and October so that the strike was impossible in July but did take place in October?...How was the strike energy transformed into energy for armed uprising? Why

was this transformation not completed? What do we know about the struggle for and against armed uprising among the workers?⁴

A 17-point questionnaire, unparalleled in its sociological thoroughness, follows Pokrovsky's plea for help. Every major event of the revolution is held up for detailed examination concerning the social background and political views of its participants and the psychological and practical effects of propaganda, agitation and the press.

Were there any strikes in your locality before 1905?... Were there any party organizations in your locality in 1905?... What was the reaction to the declaration of war with Japan in your locality?...What change in the mood of the workers, soldiers, peasants, intellectuals, and bourgeoisie do you recall in the fall of 1904?...How, when and what precisely did you come to find out about January 9?...How did the workers' movement express itself in your locality in the spring of 1905?...What impression was produced in your locality at the news of the Potemkin uprising?... the Lodz barricades...the strike movements of the summer...the Bulygin constitution?...What do you remember of the student movement during the first 8 months of 1905?...What do you remember of the professional-political unions?...Was there mass action in your locality?...How did the September-October strike movement begin in your locality?...Were there pogroms in your locality at the end of October 1905?...What do you remember of the revolutionary movement among the troops of your locality?...When did the slogan of armed uprising reach your locality?...⁵

The impressive diversity of the questions, answered in the voluminous memoir literature of 1905 that was published during the 1920's, provides convincing testimony to the historians' interest in every detail of the revolution. And it is with this vast collection of facts and personal impressions that they were able to embellish and enliven

⁴M. N. Pokrovskii, "Dvadtsatiletie nashei pervoi proletarskoi revoliutsii," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 11, 1924, p. 7.

⁵Ibid., pp. 14-16.

their continued search for the actualization of Lenin's revolutionary scheme: a general strike that would be turned into armed uprising by the vanguard of the workers' movement in order to replace the tsarist regime with the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. As the year 1905 progressed, the separate elements for this scheme gradually combined to achieve the desired order. The summer strikes failed to turn into well-organized insurrections while the October General Strike produced only an organ of potential uprising which did not fulfil its proper function. But it was in Moscow in December that the historians found all three elements: the strike, the organ of uprising, and a battle against tsarist troops which was led by Bolsheviks. However, it was also an uprising that failed to overthrow autocracy and Soviet historians had to see to it that Lenin's theories and Bolshevik tactics could survive this defeat in order to herald the successful Revolution of 1917.

From January to October

The III Congress of the RSDRP had witnessed the birth of the Bolshevik Party and had as its first official act formulated the tactics that party workers were to carry back to a country already in the midst of upheaval. The avant-garde of the proletariat returned from its "refresher course" in political theory to face its first tests as revolutionary leaders of a class with which they had had heretofore little contact. The party workers were well versed in theory

...but theory is strong only if it takes possession of the masses. There was still a long road before the Bolsheviks of 1905, the road of practical history, along which they had only begun to walk. And the forces with which they started out on that road, the organization with which they had begun the construction of the party, was still very weak, its dimensions were far from adequate to the range of Bolshevik ideas.⁶

The weakness of the Bolsheviks had been a source of intense frustration to their leaders some four months before the opening of the Congress, when the first act in the drama of 1905 --- the bloody events of January 9 -- had shown that the influence of the Bolsheviks on the labor movement had been of little consequence.

Despite the ineffective role played by the Bolshevik faction just before January 9, all Soviet historians agree that the Revolution of 1905 officially began on that day. While the party history of 1905 begins much earlier, going back at least to the previous year

⁶Astrov, op. cit., p. 124.

and the Bolshevik efforts to achieve ideological and organizational independence, the workers' procession to the Winter Palace, led by Father Gapon, remains the opening chapter of the story of 1905. It is here that we find the Bolsheviks, for the first time, confronted not only by the hostility of their political rivals, but also by the presence of the masses themselves, whose instinctive actions made them the real heroes of the revolution.

Soviet historians make it very clear that the Bolsheviks were much too weak and unknown to the workers in January 1905 to have had any influence on the preparations made to petition the tsar.

The leadership was in the hands of the Zubatovites [said V. I. Nevsky]. The Bolsheviks had the courage to acknowledge their weaknesses in order to draw the proper conclusions from their mistakes.⁷

The Mensheviks, on the other hand, who had been equally disorganized in January, subsequently revealed their innate hypocrisy by denying their weakness.⁸

The Bolsheviks faced January 9 alone. Soviet historians were able to correlate the growing split within the Social Democratic Party organizations in Russia with the development of events that reached their climax on Bloody Sunday. V. I. Nevsky pointed out that it was the differences in tactics, not theory, which caused the Social Democratic organizations in Russia to split into separate Bolshevik Committees

⁷V. Nevskii, "Ianvarskie dni v Peterburge v 1905 g.," Krasnaia letopis', No. 1, 1922, p. 33. See also E. Iaroslavskii (ed.), Istoriia VKP(b) (Moscow-Leningrad: Gos. izd., 1930), II, p. 406.

⁸Nevskii, op. cit., p. 33.

and Menshevik Groups. The disagreements that arose abroad at the II Congress apparently did not interfere with the work of the Social Democrats in Russia.⁹ As long as theories did not have to be related to an actual "concrete" political situation, cooperation was possible. But this situation began to deteriorate in the late summer of 1904 when the new Minister of Interior, Sviatopolk-Mirsky declared his trust in liberal society and the Social Democrats had to clarify their position in relation to the Liberal bourgeoisie also. The Mensheviks wanted to make use of the liberal movement and proceeded to send Social Democratic orators and workingmen to the Liberals' banquets. There, they were to explain their political aims and try to attract the most revolutionary elements of the bourgeoisie to the workers' side while exerting political pressure on the Liberal movement as a whole.¹⁰ The Bolsheviki were opposed to this conciliatory, debasing tactic of cooperation with the Liberals and preferred to appeal to the workers to come out into the streets to fight autocracy directly.

Soviet historians bring joint Social Democratic activities to an end in November 1904 when it proved impossible for a special committee of Social Democrats to lead a workers' demonstration in St. Petersburg. The blame, not surprisingly, is placed on the Mensheviks, whose constant

⁹Astrov, op. cit., p. 113.

¹⁰Nevsky singles out with bitter satisfaction a Liberal banquet held in Kharkov in December 1904 where the price of admission was so high that only very few Social Democrats were able to attend; once there, they were not given the opportunity to speak. ("Ianvarskie dni 1905 g. v provintsii," Krasnaia letopis', No. 5, 1922, pp. 93-94.)

vacillation confused the workers and left them without effective leadership. By the end of 1904, we are told, a united Social Democratic organization no longer existed in St. Petersburg and the Social Democrats had to face the tsarist forces weakened by division and dissension.¹¹

Three independent organizations were formed at that time: the "Petersburg Committee of the RSDLP" (Bolshevik), the "Group of Social Democratic Workers" (Menshevik), and the "Petersburg Group of the Central Committee" which occupied a "swampy," conciliatory position -- for all practical purposes, Soviet historians say, this was a Menshevik group also.¹² Each of the three organizations carried on independent work, had its own technical people, published its leaflets separately and tried to attract workers to its side independently. Members of the different groups apparently met only when they were invited to present their political platforms at occasional workers' meetings.¹³

So engrossed in party politics had the St. Petersburg Social Democrats become by the end of 1904 that they hardly took the time to analyze the actual labor situation in the capital. The firing of four Putilov workers, which eventually led to the general strike of January 1905, seemed less important to them than the conflict over the legality of a III Congress. Nevsky quotes an anxiously-worded letter from Krupskaja:

¹¹ Nevskii, "Ianvarskie dni v Peterburge v 1905 g.," op. cit., p.25.

¹² Ibid., p. 26. and Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 405.

¹³ Nevskii, op. cit., p. 28.

From the foreign papers we found out that there is a strike at the Putilov factory. Do we have any connections there? Is it possible that we are not able to obtain any information about the strike?¹⁴

The three Social Democratic groups, Nevsky pointed out, did not even know themselves what course to follow and it was no wonder that in the absence of more politically conscious leaders, the workers followed the inspiring but politically obscure Father Gapon.

It was only on the 4th of January, when the workers of St. Petersburg were already warmly supporting Gapon's "Union of Russian Factory Workers of St. Petersburg" that the Mensheviks issued a proclamation to the Putilov workers. The Bolsheviks delayed "even longer", till the next day, with their proclamation, but both leaflets lacked the proper psychological appeal and neither was able to impress the workers.¹⁵

In general, the Soviet historians of the 1920's consistently placed the greater burden of the blame for Social Democratic unpreparedness on the Menshevik tactics, but they did not try to exonerate the Bolsheviks.¹⁶ Thus, neither the Bolsheviks nor the Mensheviks were able to lead the workers in January 1905 and the party historians are left to deal with the Zubatovite "Union of Russian Factory Workers" and George Gapon.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁶By 1930, however, party relationships were depicted more crudely: "[The] disorganizing tactics of the Mensheviks which led to the split of the Petersburg organization on the eve of the mass action by the Petersburg workers deprived the Party of the possibility to seize the movement from the very beginning." Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 405.

Here we find the Soviet historians clearly uneasy. They had to admit that the movement of January 9 was greatly influenced by Gapon and his organization, but they also felt compelled to expose his political disrepute. The Union, rather than Gapon, is given credit for initiating the idea of a strike early in January, but the historians give it no further recognition as an effective leading organization.¹⁷ Once the idea of strike had been accepted by the workers, the mass movement became spontaneous and neither the Socialists nor the Zubatovites are given any further historical share in its leadership. The focus of attention is turned on the workers themselves.

No Soviet historian fails to be inspired by the elemental, almost mystical force that motivated the workers in January 1905.

The heroes of January 9 were the proletariat alone...powerful, naive and unselfish, irrigating with their blood their first steps to freedom.¹⁸

By dwelling upon the instinctive and independent actions of the working class, the historians could more easily degrade the leadership of Gapon. Whereas Stalinist party historians have depicted Gapon as an evil spirit driving the unsuspecting workers to their death under the very eyes of Nicholas,¹⁹ the historians of the 1920's exorcized his image by insisting on his insignificance. Although in 1925 an impressively careful study

¹⁷Nevskii, op. cit., p. 14.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁹History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks). Short Course, (New York: International Publishers, 1939), pp 57-58.

was made on the life of Gapon and the history of the workers' petition to the tsar, which showed that Gapon's role was not inconsequential,²⁰ The more generally accepted opinion was that in contrast to the workers' own spontaneous actions, "the personality and subsequent fate of Gapon was of little interest."

History shaped the masses and whoever held in his hand the pencil that wrote down the demands of the workers -- this hardly had any substantial significance....The movement was purely one of the masses and every worker understood that he himself was its creator and moving force: why, the petition was in essence worked out by the masses themselves, and really, in the end, it was not Father Gapon who composed and wrote it.²¹

While workers' spontaneity was a very stirring phenomenon, it was not allowed to continue unchecked and party historians quickly regain their ideological composure to link the temporarily stunned party organizations to the newly awakened workers' movement. Before January 9, party historians point out, the workers had consistently rejected the little help the disorganized Social Democrats had been able to offer them. They had wanted only peaceful strikes and demonstrations, and had even been known to shout back to socialist orators that autocracy

²⁰A. A. Shilov, "K dokumental'noi istorii 'Petitsii' 9 ianvaria 1905 goda," Krasnaia letopis', No. 2, 1925, pp. 19-35.

A reviewer of Shilov's edition of Gapon's autobiography concludes: "Gapon" should by no means be cast out of the story of Russian life in general and the workers' movement in particular as completely irrelevant, but on the contrary, characteristic of that life and that movement prevailing under conditions of old imperial Russia." (B. Romanov, "K 1905 godu," Krasnaia letopis', No. 3 (1925, p. 269.)

²¹Nevskii, op. cit., p. 63.

Nevsky adds that should anyone nevertheless be interested in the life of George Gapon, he may turn to the bibliography provided at the end of his monograph. This bibliography consists of 66 items and is entitled "Zubatov Unions, the 'Legal workers' movement,' Gapon and the 9th of January." It reveals the diversity of sources, the majority of

did not bother them.²²

On Sunday, January 9, 1905, all this changed. In one day, Soviet historians claim, the workers became aware of their true condition:

A tremendous upheaval took place in the consciousness of the worker: he began to see clearly and suddenly understood where the evil lay and what he had to do. And this happened in the course of a few hours on the streets of St. Petersburg where the tsarist soldiers with their bullets enlightened the consciousness of the proletariat.²³

With their faith in the tsar shattered, with Gapon reduced to insignificance, and with the Liberals unable to satisfy their immediate demands, the workers turned to the Social Democrats for leadership. And the Social Democrats, until recently paralyzed by their own vacillation and disorganization, returned to "center stage" just in time.

...in spite of the weakness of the Social Democratic organization, they did what they could and in every instance they fulfilled their special role -- to live and die with the masses.²⁴

Care is taken by the historians that the Bolsheviks on that important Sunday should be seen in the most favorable light -- a feat they accomplished at the risk of contradicting earlier statements concerning the party's weaknesses and separate existence.

...in spite of [their] disagreements, they did try during those great moments [on January 9] to act together and, in some places, somehow or other to lead the movement.²⁵

A Bolshevik organizer who participated in the events of January 9, S. Pozner, recalls the hopeless position in which the Social Democrats found themselves on the eve of Bloody Sunday:

them non-Bolshevik, which Soviet historians of the early 1920's consulted, while the annotations which accompany the titles show a surprising lack of political bias. (Krasnaia letopis', No. 1, 1922, pp. 75-80

²²Nevskii, op. cit., p. 34

²³Ibid., p. 60.

²⁴Ibid., p. 53

²⁵Ibid., p. 34.

The workers wanted a terrible conflict to be resolved in a peaceful way...The Social Democrats understood the gravity of their situation. The Bolshevik organization was weak, its strength very low. Merely to criticize Gapon and to attack him sharply was impossible; it was necessary to go to the masses, to tell them that their faith in the tsar would be broken, but that we shall be with them, that we shall go with them with a strong heart and await the moment when the tsar will destroy their deep faith.²⁶

The Bolsheviks, we are shown, knew beforehand that the tsar would not grant the workers' petition, but even though they were unable to convince anyone of the truth, they still did not abandon the workers during their hour of peril. When the shooting broke out, it was only on Vasilievsky Island that the marchers tried to fight back -- and here they were led by the Social Democrats.²⁷

After January 9, both the workers and the Social Democrats began to undergo significant change: the former had been launched on the road to class-consciousness and the latter began to see the danger of a Liberal leadership of the proletariat unless their own tactics were geared to the demands of the workers.

The relationship between the workers and the rank-and-file party workers was seen by Soviet historians as developing from a state of confusion among the workers to a growing political consciousness on their part, coupled with an awareness that the tactics of the Bolsheviks reflected their own proletarian needs while those of the Mensheviks did not. This was especially the case, we are told, when the Mensheviks

²⁶S. Pozner, "Vospominania o 9 Ianvaria 1905 g.", Krasnaia letopis', No. 1, 1922, p. 131.

²⁷Nevskii, op. cit., p. 46.

discouraged the arming of the proletariat at a time when uprising seemed imminent and the workers began to fear to go outdoors without weapons.²⁸

And so, little by little, to be sure, the Social Democratic workers were successful in explaining to the masses the essence of the disagreement, which gave the advantage, without a doubt, to the Bolsheviks, on whose side were clear slogans appropriate to the course of the development of the revolution.²⁹

Thus, while the Bolsheviks were winning the race for the leadership of the workers, they still had to make this leadership effective -- they still had to face the spontaneous and independent actions of the proletariat.

Equipped with the tactics formulated at the III Congress, the party workers soon found that opportunities were not lacking to implement their newly acquired directives. The summer of 1905 saw strikes, uprisings and clashes with tsarist troops throughout the empire. In late May the textile workers of Ivanovo-Voznesensk staged an industry-wide strike and created a Soviet of Workers' Deputies whose nature and activities furnished the subject for heated debates among historians of the 1905 Revolution twenty years later. At the same time a series of purely economic strikes had taken place in Odessa which had had a sufficiently "great influence on the development of the political consciousness of the workers"³⁰ to precipitate the general strike and uprising in June that coincided so tragically with the mutiny on the cruiser "Potemkin." Beginning with May Day demonstrations and continuing through the summer and fall, the workers of Poland and the Baltic provinces

²⁸ Astrov, op. cit., p. 117.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 460.

distinguished themselves in armed uprising against Russian rule. Especially in Warsaw and Lodz did the proletariat fight in the true revolutionary tradition. And yet, whether Bolsheviks were present or not, the uprisings invariably ended in failure.

In their treatment of Bolshevik activities during the summer of 1905 Soviet historians were faced with the need to balance the positive revolutionary gains made since January with the ultimately negative results of a revolution that failed. They showed that the Bolshevik party workers were equipped with the correct slogans and they also showed that the workers, continuously growing in class consciousness and political maturity, were prepared to follow the Bolsheviks. But when they are unable to point to a single lasting success resulting from the actions of the working class and its party, they had to admit that Bolshevik leadership was not effective and that the proletariat had still not outgrown its basically economic outlook. Rather than reconcile this contradiction, the historians list both the positive and the negative factors consecutively and conclude that the achievements of 1905 foreshadowed the greater successes of the future, while the weaknesses were characteristic of a period of trial: one had to suffer the mistakes of 1905 in order to achieve the victory of 1917.

The story of the uprising in Odessa, where revolutionary leaders had failed to unite effectively with the mutineers of the "Potemkin" contained all the negative elements of this historical scheme.

To begin with, the historians show us that in the beginning of the revolutionary year, the workers of Odessa had been "far from politically conscious and were even in part hostile to the agitation of the Social Democrats." The events in St. Petersburg on January 9 had evoked no response in Odessa, where Social Democrats had tried in vain to organize a protest demonstration.³¹ A major reason for the apathy shown by the Odessa workers was the very strong influence of former Zubatovites whose agitation among them resulted in pogroms against the Jews and intellectuals rather than in a demand for political change. Furthermore, the general economy of Odessa had suffered no apparent crises until early spring when the first strikes did, in fact, break out.

The situation among the opposition groups was no less disquieting: There were six organizations in Odessa, fighting among each other for the support of the workers: The Bolshevik "Committee of the RSDLP," the Menshevik "Group of the CC of the RSDLP," the Bund, the Committee of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, the Anarchist-Communist Group, and a Poalei Zion group.³²

Our party, existing underground, suddenly had to build up the ranks and bring out into the open struggle tens of thousands of people with arms in their hands. It took on the task...but as in the January days in the first moment of the struggle [in St. Petersburg], so too in June in Odessa, the party could not hold the leadership of the events in its hands. The uprising ended in misfortune.³³

³¹Ibid., pp. 459-460.

³²N. Avdeev, "Vosstanie chernomorskogo flota," 1905: Istoriia revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v otdel'nykh ocherkakh, ed. by M. N. Pokrovsky (Moscow-Leningrad: Gos. izd., 1925-1927), II, p. 181.

³³V. I. Nevskii, (ed.), Vosstanie na bronenostse "Kniaz' Potemkin Tavricheskii." Vospominaniia, materialy i dokumenty (Moscow-Petrograd: Gos. izd., 1924), p. 1.

Konstantin Feldman, a Social Democratic participant who put the blame for the failure of the mutiny and the uprising on the lack of support from the city, asks:

Could we really have won when all of surrounding Russia looked on so spathetically to our uprising? Why did the workers of the surrounding towns, from which troops were being brought into Odessa, remain silent? Why did they not smash the railroads, why did they not blow up the bridges, why did they not isolate the Odessa government? Why did the neighboring peasantry not send detachments... to the help of the Odessa workers?

Because they were not sufficiently prepared for revolution.³⁴

This is undoubtedly true, [Nevsky agrees with him] but it is still necessary to answer why all these elements and especially the city of Odessa, its revolutionary organization, the Social Democrats, were not equal to the situation. It seems to us that we should give this straightforward answer: the Odessa Social Democratic organization had no hold over the masses. The organization, unable to arouse the workers in answer to the January events in Petersburg, went back to the spontaneous movement in April and May and just barely began to lead the masses in June; such an organization did not have the power to lead an uprising. We see that the indecisive conciliatory tactics of the Mensheviks, dreaming of legal assemblies, were of great significance in this connection, but there is no doubt that the Bolsheviks too hardly did anything for the arming of the masses in the city, and without arms it was difficult to do anything. The Mensheviks did not want to arm, the Bolsheviks did want it, but with one thing or another they did not even work out a plan for the uprising. There were a score or two revolvers and bombs and that was all. Besides that, differences of opinion and arguments at the time of uprising finally spoiled everything. If it is impossible to talk things over with the Mensheviks, then it would have been necessary to take the initiative into their own hands: the masses follow the strong and those with initiative.³⁵

³⁴Ibid., p. 30.

³⁵Ibid.

On board the "Potemkin," matters were no more encouraging. While party historians tend to emphasize first the readiness of the sailors to rebel, they quickly turn the readers' attention to the fatal weaknesses in their plans and actions, thus making defeat inevitable:

Revolutionary propaganda and agitation had long been carried on in the Black Sea fleet. Beginning with 1903, the southern Social Democratic organizations among the sailors had organized circles which distributed illegal literature. This agitation struck deep roots among the sailors.³⁶

But what became of these roots just one page later, when the reader is told:

That which might have been expected from the arrival of the "Potemkin" in Odessa, seized in flaming revolt, did not happen...All the actions of the "Potemkin" from the time of its arrival in Odessa was distinguished by extreme indecision. The great enthusiasm that had burst out among its crew at the beginning of the uprising was put to no use.³⁷

³⁶Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 464. Historians have pointed out that Social Democratic propaganda had greater effect in the navy than in the army because the majority of the sailors had been recruited from among factory workers -- "mainly metal workers," Avdeev added. The work in the navy required men with higher education and skills in the more technical professions. Furthermore, life aboard a battleship had much in common with the collective atmosphere of a factory, where common interests and grievances could find easily coordinated outlets. (Avdeev, op. cit., pp. 181-2.)

In 1930 Pokrovsky "corrected" this view. It was not true that "seamen were workmen dressed in navy jackets." The navy, he said, was as peasant as the army, because it recruited mainly peasants from the villages near the sea coast and from the Volga valley. "...it was these villages that had rebelled in the days of the tsar Alexis, under Stenka Razin. They were the most responsive section of the peasantry, the section most prepared to be drawn into the revolution, except of course the peasantry of the industrial districts." (Pokrovsky, Brief History, Vol. II, p. 312.)

³⁷Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 465.

With an eye on the dangers of hero-worship, Nevsky tells us:

There is not the slightest doubt that the leadership on the battleship itself was also unable to lead an uprising. Matiushenko was not a leader. He was a hero, but not a leader....Think of his own writings, shifting now from the Social Democrats to the Socialist Revolutionaries, and then from the latter to the anarchists and you will say: he was a hero but not a leader. Yes, he was a hero.³⁸

But, historians assure us in their summations, in spite of everything that came to pass, it would still be wrong to conclude that the events in Odessa were harmful or that the rebels displayed "utopianism:"

Just the opposite, this showed only that a victorious outcome of an uprising occurs only on the basis of the experience of numerous unsuccessful attempts of the masses, which accustoms them to fighting, hardens them and creates, at last, such an organization and such people who will lead a victorious struggle.³⁹

The historian Bystriansky, in his article "Lenin as the Theoretician of Armed Uprising in the First Russian Bourgeois Revolution, 1905-1907," gives us an idea why it was so difficult for the newly trained party workers to plan and lead a successful uprising by showing us what Lenin had in mind:

...for the solution of the question of insurrection, Lenin approached it with original dialectic -- he threw out the abstract, metaphysical formulation of the question -- he analyzed the question of the suitability and expediency of an uprising as a means of struggle, always in a concrete way from the point of view of the conditions of place and time. An uprising -- as well as other methods of political action (boycott, for instance), is by no means some sort of miracle-working, sole-redeeming method. ...on the contrary, its success in applying it depends on a number of definite events, the exact calculation of which is the task of the revolutionary politician. We can (and must) speak seriously of insurrection only after the beginning of a real revolution -- when the revolution becomes a fact -- and then it is necessary

³⁸Nevskii, Vostanie na bronenostse "Kniaz Potemkin Tarricheskii," p. 31.

³⁹Ibid., p. 2.

to organize the preparations for the insurrection in detail, work is necessary for the creation of a special type of organization. The teachings of Lenin on uprising are not abstract, purely theoretical fantasies, they are the generalization of the revolutionary experience, an understanding of real life, a direct conclusion from the facts of objective action...Uprising as a form of struggle was born through the mass movement of 1905 -- Lenin did not stop drawing lessons from their rich experience.⁴⁰

But the perfect "revolutionary politician" did not appear. At no time during the summer of 1905 was an armed uprising staged according to Lenin's scenario in which a general strike is turned into an armed uprising that is able to overthrow tsarism and establish in its place a new organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

If the workers had merely gained local victories in the street battles that were waged in the industrial centers of Russia between January and October, the plan that Lenin had envisioned would not have been carried to completion. Armed uprising was the means by which the tsarist government was to be overthrown, but it was also to be the necessary preliminary condition for the establishment of new organs of power. It was only in the fall of 1905 that all the necessary elements of Lenin's plan began to appear in "concrete" form. The October General Strike, the creation of Soviets of Workers' Deputies in various parts of the country as well as Bolshevik-led armed uprisings, gave the Soviet historians the fullest possibility to relate Lenin's ideas to the actual development of the revolution.

⁴⁰V. Bystrianskii, "Lenin kak teoretik vooruzhennogo vosstania v pervoi russkoi burzhuaznoi revoliutsii 1905-1907 gg.," Kransnaia letopis', No. 4, 1925, p. 40.

What effect did the revolutionary movement of the cities have on the countryside? During the summer of 1905 the peasant movement began to take on alarming proportions and gave party workers the opportunity to integrate it with the proletarian revolutionary upsurge. Soviet historians again are confronted with the same contradiction they found when they analyzed the workers movement: conditions were favorable for revolution, but the results were quite disappointing. The uprisings that were taking place throughout rural Russia were closely related to the revolutionary movement in the cities, yet the two movements proved to be unable to support each other.

Histories of the peasant movement of 1905 begin with a short survey of the forty years that preceded the revolution in order to show the changes that took place in the countryside since the Reforms of 1861. For information on the social and economic conditions during the last part of the 19th century, the Soviet historians adhered closely to Lenin's writings on the peasant problem and paraphrased his analysis of the contradictions that existed between the development of capitalist production in agriculture and the preservation of the old productive relationships which survived the epoch of serfdom. In the words of a party historian,

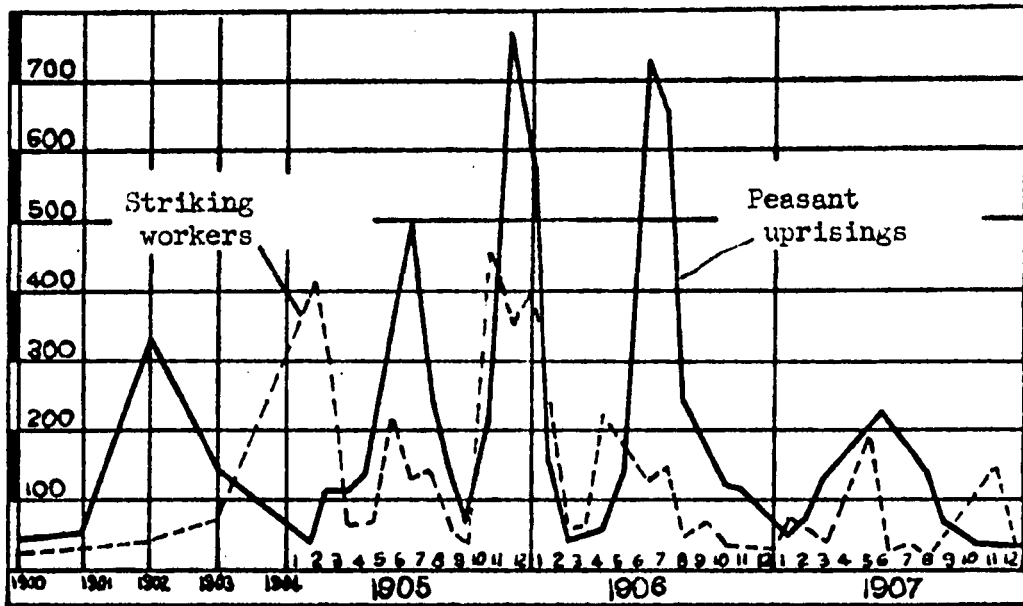
...if the presence of a semi-feudal structure in the countryside and the dictatorship of the landowners are the basic causes of the [peasant] movement, then its immediate prerequisite is the development of capitalism and together with it the aggravation of class contradictions in the countryside. The development of capitalism in the countryside increased the oppression of the landowners who, making the gradual transition from a labor-dues system to a capitalist one, seized the peasants' land, prohibited the grazing of the peasants' cattle on those lands which

heretofore were used by the peasants, prohibited the cutting of timber. Further, making the transition to capitalism, the landowners increased more and more the burden of rent, and increased the oppression of labor dues, and so forth.⁴¹

Figures for the number of uprisings that occurred between 1861 and 1905 are produced to show the rise and fall of the movement, but it was only in 1901 and 1902 that peasant uprisings could be connected with workers' disturbances in the neighboring cities. It was in the Poltava and Kharkov provinces that peasant revolts broke out as the direct result of the strike movement of late 1901. Repercussions were felt in other parts of Russia, especially in Saratov and Tambov provinces where the peasants rebelled against the landowners.

By the time the Revolution began in January 1905, the peasant movement had begun to wane somewhat, except in the Caucasus, where it still continued its momentum. Elsewhere, the strikes following January 9 in the cities were reflected in the rural areas only a month later, just at the time when the urban movement began to calm down. In spite of this disorderly beginning, Soviet historians were able to show that with the coming of spring a clear correlation could be seen between the rise and fall of the workers and peasant outbreaks. A chart plotted by S. Dubrovsky, shows this parallelism graphically and was widely used by historians of the peasant movement to demonstrate the close link between the two partners in the forthcoming democratic dictatorship.

⁴¹Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 325.

WORKERS AND PEASANTS MOVEMENTS 1900-1907⁴²

According to the authors of the History of the VKP(b) the revolutionary movement in the countryside began on February 13, 1905 in the Dmitrievsk district of Kursk province, whence it spread elsewhere. During the spring and summer peasants seized land, ruined prairies by illegal grazing of their cattle, cut timber indiscriminately, burned manor houses and caused general havoc in the Ukraine, the Kuban, Volhynia and Podolia and the Caucasus. In the Baltic provinces the movement took a particularly favorable turn: the disturbances turned into a strike movement among the rural proletariat.⁴³

⁴²Ibid., p. 331, taken from S. Dubrovskii, Krest'ianstvo v 1917 g.

⁴³E. Morokhovets, "Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie 1905-1907 ss.1. Sotsial-demokratii," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia No. 2, 1925, p. 99.

August and September were characterized as the period of calm before the storm, both in the cities and in the country, until the October Strike served as the direct impetus for a sharp upswing in peasant revolutionary activities.

Numerous agitators were sent to the country. The movement began around the 20th of October...in the Serdobsk and Balashev districts of Saratov province. Almost simultaneously...peasant movements in the neighboring provinces began--in Penza and Tambov...[and in] Chernigov province, which at the end of October achieved second place after Saratov as a revolutionary center.⁴⁴

After the first of November the sweep of the peasant movement diminished somewhat but it rose again in December in time to coincide with the major disturbances and armed uprisings in the cities.

But this coincidence in time did not bring victory, for the simple reason that

[in] October-December the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants lacked organization and preparation in order to overthrow autocracy and achieve victory.⁴⁵

Pokrovsky elaborates on the reasons why this mass movement of peasants failed:

...there was no case where the peasants united within the boundaries of more than one district, and there was only one such district -- the Balashev district in Saratov province. As for other places, volosti did unite, but in many cases not even volosti, [instead] neighboring villages fought amongst each other for the legacy of the landowners property.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 327.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶M. N. Pokrovskii, "Nachalo proletarskoi revoliutsii v Rossii," op. cit., p. xii.

Elsewhere, he reviews the entire course of the peasant and workers movement and found that the presence or absence of unity between the two classes was not the basic factor in the defeat of the revolution:

The mass movement of the workers and of the peasants ended in failure. What were the causes of this failure? For a time we thought that one of the main causes of this failure was the circumstance that the two movements did not coincide in time ...But, we have seen that the statistics of peasant risings contradict this view. Peasant revolts were most frequent at precisely the same time as the strikes and insurrections of the workers, viz., in the autumn and early winter of 1905. No doubt the peasant movement to some extent did lag behind: the workers' revolution dates after all, from January 1905; the peasants at that time were so little affected by the revolutionary movement, that in reactionary quarters hopes of peasant support were entertained as late as the following summer...But the main cause [for the failure] was not this lack of mechanical coincidence between the two movements. The main discrepancy lay elsewhere. The working-class had not yet entirely got rid of "Economism" in 1905 -- the peasants did not even begin to get rid of it in 1906. Even their leaders never realized that the aim of the fight must not be to obtain rights but to win power.⁴⁷

The essentially primitive character of the peasant movement was also emphasized by Dubrovsky and Grave.⁴⁸ Before 1905 it was not even a real mass movement at all, according to these two historians, except in Poltava and Kharkov provinces. Elsewhere, they felt, there were only separate, poorly coordinated outbursts. But, in spite of its limitations "the Party, and in particular V. I. Lenin, very strongly took into account the inevitability of the growth of the

⁴⁷M. N. Pokrovsky, Brief History, Vol. II, p. 238.

⁴⁸g. Dubrovskii and B. Grave, "Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie nakanune revoliutsii 1905 goda (1900-1904 gg)" 1905: Istoriia revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v otchel'nykh ocherkakh, ed. by M. N. Pokrovsky (Moscow-Leningrad: Gos. izd., 1925-1927), I, p. 389.

peasant revolution."⁴⁹ Nearly in direct contradiction to an earlier statement, we are told:

...Now, having before us the perspective of the Revolutions of 1905 and of 1917, we can say that already at that time there was in the countryside a real, authentic revolutionary situation.⁵⁰

In other words, the peasant movement suffered from the same weaknesses and strengths as did the revolutionary movement as a whole: it was still "embryonic," but 1917 proved retrospectively that this was the beginning of a development that would eventually lead to the overthrow of autocracy and the establishment of a dictatorship in which the peasants were to play the principal supporting role.

The historians of the 1920's were particularly concerned about the class division that existed within the peasantry and tried to establish which groups took the leading part in the rebellions. All Soviet historians agree with Lenin that during the first stage of the revolution all the peasants did in fact rebel against the landowners. But, the historians pointed out, some rebelled more than others. Thus, according to Dubrovsky and Grave the middle and poor peasants were more revolutionary than the rich peasants. With the end of NEP this anti-kulak attitude increased and the rich peasant of 1905 joined the ranks of Soviet villains.

E. Morokhovets, a historian who specialized in the peasant movement, showed that the class character of the uprisings varied from place to place. Almost everywhere, he stated, all strata of

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 390.

⁵⁰Ibid.

the peasantry took part in the movement, though the middle peasants were the most active. The poor peasant was more timid: "This is explained by the oppressed state of the poor peasants and also their fear of remaining without work or a crust of bread in case of a long drawn-out strike."⁵¹ As for the kulak, he was both aggressor and victim in the uprisings. The movement was, after all, directed against all landowners, big and small, and not only against the owners of the "cut-offs." Thus, in some parts of Russia -- Novorossia and parts of middle Transvolga-- the movement was also directed against well-to-do peasants, the rural bourgeoisie and "resulted in a stubborn fight between the various strata of the peasantry."⁵² As far as proving himself a revolutionary force where he was not the victim, the kulak "did not show any initiative," although he did take part in the revolts against the landowners. As a matter of fact, Morokhovets pointed out, he often derived the greatest material benefits from an uprising: Owning the greatest number of horses, he was able to cart away the greatest amount of illegally cut timber and other valuable loot.⁵³

By 1930 the kulak of 1905 was definitely considered a part of the landowning class and Pokrovsky, who had earlier given the rich peasants a leading role in the uprisings, now had to retract his assertions and spell out the correct interpretation:

⁵¹Morokhovets, op. cit., p. 99.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

Our histories are full of a systematic and very plausible falsification...When the revolution was over the Free Society of Economics published two volumes of letters from their rural correspondents on the peasant movement...of 1905-7. These two volumes contain what purport to be documents...but they have been arranged so as to suggest that the movement had at its head the village bourgeoisie, the kulaks. As I am an historian by profession, and consequently a victim to the fetishism of documents...I swallowed the gudgeon and all my books contain statements to this effect. But since then we have delved deeper and struck the reports of the governors and gendarmes...It turns out that far from being led to by kulaks, the movement was directed against the Kulaks. In a number of cases the gendarmes and governors reported that the movement was not only against the squires, but against the rich peasants, especially if the latter leased the squire's land and took the place of the squires. The peasants saw things as they were: if you leased a squire's estate you were as good as a squire, and your being a peasant from their own village was entirely beside the point...It was only against the squires that the peasants formed a united front; as soon as the latter were ousted, if only for a moment, the class struggle blazed up in the villages with extraordinary rapidity.⁵⁴

What part did the Bolsheviki play in the peasant movement?

Whereas in the cities, the chief competitors of the Bolsheviki were the Mensheviki and Liberals, in the countryside they had to contend with the strongly entrenched Socialist Revolutionaries -- the modernized Populists of the 19th century, whom the Soviet historians classify as a petty-bourgeois party, as Lenin had done before them. Besides these two principal socialist groups, Dubrovsky and Grave point out that the upper bourgeoisie and landowners also exerted a political influence on the peasants through the legal press.

⁵⁴M. N. Pokrovsky, Brief History, p. 313.

Not only the fate of the socialist revolution but also the outcome of the democratic revolution depends upon whose side the peasant will stand. From this stems the particular importance of the struggle between the proletariat on the one hand, and the petty bourgeois and other groups on the other, for the influence on the peasants.⁵⁵

Social Democratic organizations⁵⁶ functioned in the more industrial parts of the country -- particularly in the provinces of Tver' and Nizhny Novgorod, as well as in Kiev, Poltava and parts of Kharkov provinces. The Socialist Revolutionaries had their centers in the provinces of Tambov, Voronezh and Saratov. In Tambov the "Peasant Union of the SR Party" had been formed in 1902 and continued to print and distribute leaflets and proclamations. Although Dubrovsky and Grave quote extensively from the SR party organ Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia and the Social Democratic Iskra, showing the wide variety of work carried on among the peasants, the authors still concluded that on the eve of 1905 the peasant movement was still far from having experienced true political consciousness.

An outstanding achievement of the Bolshevik Committees of Tver' was the organization of the first Peasant Soviet of 1905.

⁵⁵Dubrovskii and Grave, op. cit., p. 264.

⁵⁶The authors do not distinguish between the Bolshevik and the Menshevik factions of the Party, but Soviet readers may assume that Bolsheviks are meant because it has been made abundantly clear to them by party historians that the Mensheviks "underestimated" the peasant.

Here the professional party workers were greatly aided by the presence of large numbers of workers who had maintained strong ties with their native villages. These worker-peasants were natural agents of propaganda as they moved back and forth from the city to the village.⁵⁷

Pavel Gorin, whose special field of interest was the history of the Soviets of 1905, points out the obvious fact that the Peasant Soviets foreshadowed "the organizational unity of the two revolutionary strata -- the proletariat and the peasantry."⁵⁸ Not only were the majority of the Tver' peasants closely connected with industry and were therefore attracted to the propaganda of the proletariat, but in the villages themselves, the Tver' Committee had been able to set up Social Democratic cells as well.

"The Tver' Committee," writes one of the organizers of [a] Soviet... "gave directives for all that was necessary to organize peasant Soviets. Each village organizer had to call together a meeting of all the peasants and suggest to them to elect a Soviet from their midst.... From the very first days of the organization of Soviets, in spite of the short period of their existence, the Soviets turned into new organs of power in the villages."⁵⁹

Thus there was formed an organization of significantly greater importance to the history of the Soviet Union than the revolutionary peasant committees which the III Congress had called for. Aside from holding a substantial amount of power, the Peasant Soviets also prepared themselves as organs of armed uprising by collecting weapons

⁵⁷ Pokrovskii, "Nachalo proletarskoi revoliutsii v Rossii," op. cit., p. xiv.

⁵⁸ P. O. Gorin, "Chem zhe byli sovety rabochikh deputatov v 1905 g?" Istorik Marksist, I, 1926, p. 211.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

and organizing peasant patrols.⁶⁰ And, as a crowning achievement, the Peasant Soviets of Tver' of 1905 foresaw the organizational structure of the Soviets of 1917," when attempts were made to maintain communications with Soviets of other villiages and districts.⁶¹

But the few Social Democratic Peasant Soviets were not enough to bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. The peasant movement was too weak, too disorganized and its actions too sporadic. Soviet historians had to conclude that the peasants still had much to learn in the next twelve years.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 212.

From October to December

The Soviets, of course, were primarily urban and proletarian organizations whose history is closely connected with the revolutionary upsurge of the second half of 1905. Let us take a closer look at the Soviet treatment of the events that took place in the fall and winter months.

It is a difficult task for any historian to treat the October General Strike as a separate topic, without also discussing the emergence of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies. Especially in their examination of the situation in St. Petersburg, where the strike and the newly conceived workers' organization appeared almost simultaneously, Soviet historians often present them as causally connected.

Pavel Gorin, whose book on the Soviets of Workers' Deputies was considered a major contribution to Soviet historiography, said just that: the emergence of the Soviet in St. Petersburg was the direct result of the October Strike.⁶² In order to present the emergence of the St. Petersburg Soviet in its appropriate context, Gorin brought forth two characteristics of the General Strike that had major significance: It was a political strike in which "the political demands were the cement that united the proletariat into a single mass and made it possible for the proletariat to act as a class with which to realize its class interests."⁶³ Secondly, the liberal bourgeoisie, though deeply involved in the October Strike, was prepared to support

⁶² Ibid., p. 201. (The title of his book: Ocherki po istorii sovetov rabochikh deputatov v 1905 godu. Moscow: Kommun.un-t im. Sverdlova, 1925.)

⁶³ Ibid.

the proletariat only up to the point of open conflict.⁶⁴

S. I. Chernomordik, an active participant of the Moscow uprising, also saw the October movement as having had a broad class basis before the workers began preparations for insurrection. His image of the October Strike is seen as part of a revolutionary progression toward the proletarian revolution.

Until the October Strike the proletariat only had the hegemony of the revolution, i.e., it stood at its head; behind it followed the remaining classes ... All classes wanted the overthrow of the old regime: the industrial bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, the proletariat and the peasantry. True, their eventual aims were different, but their basic task was the overthrow of autocracy and the establishment of free conditions for the capitalist development of Russia.... When the proletariat went farther on the road to "December" all the other classes dropped behind The proletariat was alone. And it changed from hegemony to the sole bearer of the revolution.⁶⁵

Chernomordik concludes that because of this difference in the class content of the October and the December movements, the former may be called a "national revolution" and the latter a "proletarian revolution."⁶⁶

⁶⁴Gorin quite unhesitatingly uses V. S. Voitinsky's Gody pobed i porazhenii to show dramatic evidence of the workers' eagerness to obtain arms and fight in the streets of St. Petersburg, but instead were told by the leaders of the Soviet to go home. Concerning the author of this memoir, Gorin said: Voitinsky is not a Bolshevik at present, but on the contrary, an emigrant and malicious enemy of the Soviet Union. However, I think that one can still obtain much of value from this document." (Ibid., p. 202.)

⁶⁵S. I. Chernomordik, "Dekabr'skoe vooruzhennoe vosstanie," Istoriik Marksist, I, 1926, p. 239.

⁶⁶This rather "socialistic" expression was not used by Chernomordik in his book Moskovskoe vooruzhennoe vosstanie v dekabre 1905 goda (Moscow-Leningrad: "Moskovskii rabochii," 1926), p. 203, where he called the December uprising a "people's" [narodnaia] revolution. See also footnote 121.

Thus, we have a strike that was political in character, was led by the proletariat, and saw the emergence of a new type of workers organization. But what about the avant-garde -- the Bolshevik party?

The most obvious weakness we find in Soviet studies of the October events is the admission that after eight months of experience in revolutionary activities, the Bolshevik party workers were still unable to lead the workers along the path of Leninist tactics -- they were still only now emerging from the underground.

The mass movement was out in the open [recalls Maria Essen,] and we were still underground, we could not keep up with events and life had left us behind.⁶⁷

Basing themselves on the memoirs of participants, Soviet historians were quite evidently torn between an admiration for the spontaneous creativity of the masses during October and the desire to show the increasing influence of propaganda and agitation on the population.

Was the October Strike spontaneous? [asks Shestakov] Both yes and no. For such groups as the railroad workers -- no, because they had been prepared for it, which was evident from the ... decisions of the II Congress of the Railroad Union.

For enterprises where the proletariat was under the ideological influence of the "left" parties, the idea of a general strike was also not new. But the smaller enterprises, factories and plants, in out-of-the-way places, because of the low level of the political development of the proletariat, naturally, were attracted to the strike spontaneously.⁶⁸

⁶⁷M. M. Essen, "V 1905 godu," Krasnaia letopis', No. 1, 1926, p. 100.

⁶⁸A. Shestakov, "Vseobshchaia oktiabr'skaia stachka 1905 g." 1905: Istoriia revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v otdel'nykh ocherkakh, ed. by M. N. Pokrovky (Moscow-Leningrad: Gos. izd., 1925-1927), II, pp. 264-5.

Gorin was more specific about the fact that the October Strike had been anticipated by labor leaders. It is wrong to think that it was spontaneous, he asserted; neither in the sense of it having been an accidental occurrence, or that it came as a surprise to the parties.

Revolutionary development has its laws and its logic. In this sense the October Strike was the result of tremendous labor, directed toward the proletariat in the course of the spring and summer of 1905. It was inevitable, as it is inevitable for dawn to appear after the dark night.⁶⁹

Pokrovsky on the other hand, had not come to this same conclusion all at once. In 1930, when he had made a number of corrections in some of his earlier premises, he also made a reappraisal of spontaneity. In the statement that follows we can see the ambivalence Soviet historians must have felt when they approached the problem of the driving forces of the October Strike:

It was this training [at Ivanovo-Voznesensk] that led the working class up to the idea which was realized in October 1905, the idea of the General strike. Of course the working-class did not arrive at this idea in any "elemental" (spontaneous and unorganized) way. As early as July the Moscow Committee of our party, basing itself on the state of mind created by the Ivanovo-Voznesensk strike began to agitate for a general strike....

I am thus introducing a correction into my own previous statements. I have described the October strike as "elemental." And of course in a certain sense it was "elemental," and those comrades are not quite in the right who, in trying to correct me, substitute "accidental" for "elemental." One comrade, for instance...says in his memoirs: certain "historians" (the inverted commas are his) describe the strike as "elemental," but there was nothing "elemental" in it, except that it began quite unexpectedly for our Party Committee. Well, if you put it that way I do not know what "elemental" means. The point, we are told, is not that

⁶⁹Gorin, Ocherki, p. 11.

it was "elemental" but that the children at the Putilov works... having heard a great deal about strikes gave the signal to stop work, after which the Committee stepped in and took the matter in hand. I can only say that if the Party Committee only stepped in after the children, there is not much to be said for the Committee. The truth is, that the idea of a general strike was in existence before that time; propaganda was being made for it and it was this propaganda that produced its fruit in the October strike.⁷⁰

Thus, the October Strike was not a sudden, inexplicable event, and most historians come close to attributing a direct relationship between Bolshevik propaganda and mass action.

But with the formation of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies in St. Petersburg, the theory of the spontaneous creativity of the masses won the upper hand. It seemed as though the workers moved along the road to class consciousness largely by themselves. Bolshevik leadership had exerted a certain amount of influence, but it had not yet found itself completely in charge of a revolutionary situation. In an effort to discredit the view that the St. Petersburg Soviet was an outgrowth of the Shidlovsky Commission because it was made up largely of workers who had served as delegates to that body in January, a Soviet historian concluded:

It would be much more correct to say that both these institutions [the Shidlovsky Commission and the St. Petersburg Soviet] should be linked with the strike movement of January and October. Freely elected representatives appeared at the Petersburg factories and plants immediately after the events of January 9 before there was talk of a Shidlovsky Commission and without any connection with governmental measures concerning the workers' problems Before the elections to the Commission and even before the beginning of the election campaign, these deputies were acknowledged as competent representatives because of their frequent dealings with management. . . .

⁷⁰M. N. Pokrovsky, Brief History, p. 316.

These leaders of the strikes also made up the basic core of the Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies in the days of the October Strike, and whether or not they had been electors to the Shidlovsky Commission was an independent matter.⁷¹

By the fall of 1905, not only was there no lack of rank-and-file party workers active in the major industrial centers of Russia, but the foremost leaders of the Social Democratic movement were beginning to return from exile when the relative freedom of the post-Manifesto days beckoned them home. When Lunacharsky returned to St. Petersburg, some time after Lenin, he found a very "singular and complex" situation:

Not only we Bolsheviks, but also the entire Social Democratic Party, found ourselves not at all at the head of the workers' class... . On the contrary, the Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies, enjoying the unlimited faith of the workers, was led by people completely strange to us.⁷²

The note of dismay in Lunacharsky's recollection was changed into open admiration by many Soviet historians and participants. Dmitri Sverchkov, who, along with Radin represented the Bolsheviks in the Executive Committee of the St. Petersburg Soviet,⁷³ and, in the 1920's had become one of the chief historians of that organization, found the proletariat not only wondrously endowed with creative spontaneity, but maintained that "their temper was purely Leninist."⁷⁴

⁷¹A. Kats and Iu. Milonov, Professional'noe dvizhenie. 1905: Materialy i dokumenty, ed. by M. N. Pokrowsky (Moscow-Leningrad: Gos. izd., 1925-1928), IV, p. 22-23.

⁷²A. V. Lunacharskii, "Bol'sheviki v 1905 g" Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 11, 1925, p. 56.

⁷³I. Deutscher, The Prophet Armed: Trotsky, 1897-1921 (London: Oxford University Press, 1954). p. 130.

Sverchkov himself, however, states that at the time the Soviet was first established he left the Bolsheviks because of his disagreement with Bogdanov on the Bolshevik attitude toward the Soviets. (Istoriik Marksist, I, p. 219)

⁷⁴D. Sverchkov, "K voprosu o vzniknovenii soveta rabochikh deputatov," Krasnaia letopis', No. 4, 1925, p. 289.

Sverchkov's statement was a Soviet historian's dream come true: the meeting of two essentially opposite concepts -- spontaneity and consciousness -- forming a dialectic synthesis, a harmonious and integrated union between the proletariat and the party. However, most historians did not go so far. Rather, they continued to see the two elements acting separately, continually by-passing each other just when they needed each other most. And this was most appropriate, for 1905 was not the perfectly executed bourgeois-democratic revolution and there was no need to paint a perfect picture.

Unlike later Soviet historians, the interpretation in the 1920's went beyond mere generalities, and attempts were made to analyze the nature of the creative initiative of the proletariat.

Several approaches were taken during the 1920's concerning the creation of the Soviets -- particularly the St. Petersburg Soviet. The belief that the St. Petersburg Soviet was the invention of the Mensheviks -- that it was the organizational manifestation of their plan to cover Russia with "organs of revolutionary self-government" -- is, of course, discredited by all Soviet historians. Even those writers who admit that the Mensheviks were more closely connected with the St. Petersburg Soviet than the Bolsheviks, will hasten to add that the Soviet did not in fact correspond to the projected plans of the Mensheviks. Sverchkov tells us that:

...the Mensheviks never had in mind at all to create the Soviet as an organ for the seizure of governmental power and the central organization of an armed uprising... . The Soviet was not cast in the form which they had prepared for it; the chicken hatched a gosling and then, sitting on the shore, she looked with astonish-

ment and clucked uneasily when it dared throw itself into the ...sea of revolution.⁷⁵

Both Sverchkov and Gorin agreed that the Soviet of St. Petersburg emerged spontaneously as the direct result of the October Strike and rejected the view that it had modelled itself upon the Soviet of Ivanovo-Voznesensk of May 1905.

I am very glad [Sverchkov] said that comrade Gorin is in agreement with me...and does not support the assertion of some comrades that the first Soviet was not the St. Petersburg one, but the Ivanovo-Voznesensk one. It was called a Soviet, but it had nothing in common with Soviets as we understand them.⁷⁶

...The great-grandfather of Soviet power was the St. Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies of 1905, and its ancestor was the Petersburg proletariat.⁷⁷

Gorin had been criticized for leaving the impression that the St. Petersburg Soviet arose suddenly and full-blown during the October Strike. However, in a lecture sponsored by the Society of Marxist Historians in late 1925 he had been careful to say:

It is interesting to note that the Soviets emerged as a higher form of the workers' movement in places where revolutionary might and the organization of the proletariat grew over from previous forms of organization.⁷⁸

This was precisely the approach taken by Gorin's chief critic, V. I. Nevsky, who felt that an organization such as the Ivanovo-Voznesensk Soviet was indeed a perfect example of a less-developed form of workers' organization from which the more politically oriented Soviets of the fall of 1905 eventually arose.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Sverchkov, *Istovik Marksist*, I, p. 218.

⁷⁷Sverchkov, "K voprosu o vzniknovenii soveta rabochikh deputatov," *op. cit.*, p. 288.

⁷⁸Gorin, "Chem zhe byli sovety rabochikh deputatov v 1905 g." *op. cit.*, p. 203.

The Soviets emerged and grew from those forms of collective revolutionary creativity which were produced by the workers of all Russia right after the January events -- strike committees, elective institutions...railroad bureaux, strike committees of factories, fighting committees in regiments and battalions -- in a word, all those fighting revolutionary organizations, sometimes old in form, but new in their character and composition, which had as their first and principal task the leadership of the revolutionary struggle of workers against autocracy and the bourgeoisie.⁷⁹

The Soviet of Ivanovo, Nevsky believed, was no longer a simple strike committee. It already had many features of the future soviets in its organizational structure, and despite statements to the contrary by Gorin and Sverchkov, political demands had in fact been issued by the workers of Ivanovo. It would have been too much to expect a workers' organization in the spring of 1905 to have the same fully developed political goals, including armed uprising, as those which arose in the fall and winter of that year. Thus Nevsky found that there was ample justification in basing his genealogy of the St. Petersburg Soviet on organizations such as the one in Ivanovo-Voznesensk.

To settle the matter conclusively, he showed that Lenin's definition of a Soviet in "The Victory of the Cadets and the Tasks of the Workers' Party" proved beyond question that the Soviet at Ivanovo was in fact worthy of its name, for it fitted the description:

These bodies [Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Railwaymen's and peasants' Deputies, new rural and urban authorities, and so on, and so forth] were set up exclusively by the revolutionary sections of the people; they were formed irrespective of all laws and regulations, entirely in a revolutionary way, as a product of the native genius of the people, as a manifestation

⁷⁹V. I. Nevskii, Sovety i vooruzhennoe vosstanie v 1905 godu, (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo vsesiuznogo obshchestva politkatorzhan i ssyl'noposelentsev, 1931), p. 82.

of the independent activity of the people which had rid itself, or was ridding itself, of its old police fetters. Lastly, they were indeed organs of authority, for all their rudimentary spontaneous, amorphous and diffuse character in composition and in activity.⁸⁰

Nevsky continued to defend such labor organizations as the Ivanovo Soviet as direct ancestors not only of the St. Petersburg Soviet but of the Moscow one as well:

The Soviet of Workers' Deputies as an organ of uprising was advanced not in St. Petersburg but in Moscow already in September 1905 and not all at once, as comrade Gorin presents it, but only after the experiences of Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Kostroma, Moscow/Printer's Soviet and the workers of other towns had groped for that form of organization, the name of which was already in the air, which was called in Ivanovo as well as in Kostroma and in Moscow the Soviet of Workers' Deputies and which was still existing in its rudimentary form.⁸¹

This line of reasoning introduces a new train of thought: Moscow has primacy over St. Petersburg in the formulation of the idea of a Soviet of Workers' Deputies. Thus, Nevsky could with one blow enhance the importance of Moscow, where the Bolsheviki held the leadership, and he could also discredit his literary rival, Pavel Gorin.

Among the forefathers of both the St. Petersburg and the Moscow Soviets, historians found the Soviet of Printers' Deputies, formed in September 1905 in Moscow. This council, which eventually comprised 264 deputies and represented 110 printing establishments, had as its principal support the Menshevik-dominated Union of Typographical Workers. The Union had joined the Mensheviks in August, but there were also

⁸⁰V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1962), X, p. 243. cited in Nevskii, Sovety i vooruzhennoe vosstanie v 1905 godu, p. 23.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 34.

Bolsheviks in it. And so, Nevsky points out, it was the kind of Soviet that Lenin had prescribed: a fighting arrangement, a union of all the revolutionary elements of the population.⁸² "It was not an organization of the usual strike type," he continued, but in its organizational structure resembled the city-wide Soviet that was established in November.⁸³ Expanding his historical horizon, he concluded:

The Soviet of Printers...headed that kind of a struggle which went far beyond the limits of the ordinary struggle for economic interests: the peaceful strike turned into uprising, and an organization of a peaceful character became a fighting organization.⁸⁴

After a major strike of the printers in September proved successful, other professions combined also and formed the "Soviet of Five Trades" which included the printers, carpenters, mechanics, tobacco workers and railroad workers. It was this larger organization, dominated by the Mensheviks, which according to A. A. Shestakov issued the first appeal to the workers of Moscow to form a general Soviet of Workers Deputies to include all trades. In the name of the Soviet of Five Trades, the Mensheviks had declared that they

"...acknowledge the need for the workers of all establishments to elect deputies in order that these deputies unite according to professions and further through their representatives in a general soviet of workers of all of Moscow."⁸⁵

It was a representative of the Soviet of Five Trades who, during a meeting of printers in St. Petersburg early in October, introduced the idea of a Soviet there, "an idea based upon the experience of Ivanovo."⁸⁶

⁸²Ibid., p. 30.

⁸³Ibid., p. 31-32.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 32.

⁸⁵Shestakov, op. cit., p. 300.

⁸⁶Ibid.

This fitted well in Nevsky's genealogy of the St. Petersburg Soviet, but he did not accept Shestakov's Menshevik-inspired call for the formation of a Soviet in Moscow. Rather, he based himself completely on the controversial Bolshevik appeal to the Moscow workers, "Toward the Struggle," to substantiate his assertion that already in September 1905, the Bolsheviks had called for the creation of the Moscow Soviet:

This appeal, "Toward the Struggle," is really a remarkable document, because...in it the Bolsheviks already in September...took into account the experience of Ivanovo-Voznesensk as well as of Kostroma and the printers of Moscow, and in general the experience of the whole previous movement. Now in September, after Lodz, after the Potemkin uprising...the Moscow Bolsheviks raised the question about the fact that "Moscow -- the heart of Russia, must become and is becoming the heart of the all-people's uprising."⁸⁷

Thus Nevsky makes it clear that even though the Bolsheviks called for a Soviet before the Mensheviks could do so, this did not mean that they had formulated an original idea. The idea of a Soviet was already "in the air" and was based upon previous organizations independently formed by the workers without the help of the Party. The connection which may have existed between Bolshevik propaganda and the outbreak of the October Strike was not present in the formation of the Soviets. Gorin's position comes closest to demonstrating that such a tie may have existed when he links the emergence of the St. Petersburg Soviet directly to

⁸⁷In his article on the Moscow Soviet and its preparations for uprising, Vasil'ev-Iuzhin said: "The idea of forming a Soviet of Workers' Deputies in Moscow developed among the Moscow proletariat already in September or in the beginning of October (Old Style), 1905, when the general strike broke out in Moscow, after which it included all of Russia. At the very height of the strike, a proclamation was issued by the Moscow Social-Democrats entitled "In the Struggle." [Continuing in a lengthy footnote, Vasil'ev-Iuzhin gave his opinion that the proclamation, an unsigned copy of which had been included in a 1920 collection of essays and materials on 1905, was composed by the Moscow Bolsheviks.] ...In

the October Strike, although he too, calls the appearance of that body spontaneous. Other historians present their readers with an independent revolutionary labor movement -- a purely economic movement which in the course of the revolution began to acquire political characteristics but which was not directly under the control of any political party. "Spontaneous" thus takes on the meaning of "independent."

We have thus reached a point where the Bolshevik tactics and propaganda based on the decisions of the III Congress did not contribute to the creation of new organs of power but rather stood side by side with an independent labor movement whose spontaneous achievements had to be integrated into these newly formulated theories and tactics.

spirit, in content, in its slogans, it is clearly Bolshevik. It is even possible that it was written by me since the majority of the proclamations, resolutions and similar documents of the Moscow Committee, and later of the Federative Committee and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies were at that time written and edited by me. The style of the proclamation also seems to be mine. However, it is very difficult to remember everything with complete certainty after twenty years...I do not think, however, that such a proclamation could have been issued by the Mensheviks at that time, although the Moscow Mensheviks followed the Bolsheviks and often flaunted revolutionary verbiage...[The] proclamation had been issued...significantly earlier [than the emergence of the St. Petersburg Soviet], while the idea of a Soviet of Workers' Deputies came up by itself, especially after the experience of the organization of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies in Ivanov-Voznesensk at the time of the celebrated summer strikes." ("Moskovskii Sovet rabochikh deputatov v 1905 godu i podgotovka im vooruzhennogo vosstaniia," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 4, 1925, p. 85.)

It was this statement by Vasil'ev-Iuzhin that gave Soviet historians the only documentary evidence that the Bolsheviks and not the Mensheviks took the initiative to form a Soviet in Moscow. See: Robert M. Slusser, "The Forged Bolshevik Signature: A Problem in Soviet Historiography," Slavic Review, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, June 1964, pp. 294-308, for the subsequent historiographic use made of this document by later Soviet historians.

How did the Soviet historians relate the existence of the Soviets with the tactics formulated by the Bolsheviks at the III Congress and how did they integrate this new non-party workers' organization into the fundamental political theories of Lenin?

It was not denied that the Bolsheviks in St. Petersburg were confused when first confronted by the Soviets. Lenin did not return to Russia until November and the leadership of the party at the time the Soviet was established was in the hands of A. A. Bogdanov, whose subsequent defection from Leninism made him a well-established target for condemnation by Soviet historians.

Having carried Lenin's tactical ideas to their logical conclusion, Bogdanov advised the Bolsheviks in St. Petersburg not to participate in the Soviet directly. He felt that the Soviet was "politically unformed and socialistically immature" and would continue to maintain the proletariat on a primitive political level, thereby exposing them to bourgeois influences. For this reason, he believed that it was the duty of the Bolsheviks to urge the Soviet to accept the program and tactics of the Social Democratic party and acknowledge the leadership of the party. In case the Soviet should refuse, he told his party workers, they should leave the Soviet and expose its antiproletarian character.

⁸⁸ Nevskii, Sovety i vooruzhennoe rostanie v 1905 godu, p. 84.

While many historians blame Bogdanov personally for the initial opposition shown by the Bolsheviks toward the Soviet,⁸⁹ it was still possible in 1931 to justify his mistaken interpretation on the basis of the resolution on open political action accepted by the III Congress.

In essence, the Bolsheviks remained true to the resolutions of the III Congress and only developed more concretely the idea expressed in paragraph "b"...: "To make use of all legal and semi-legal workers' societies, unions and other organizations for the realization of exerting predominant influence on them...and turning them whenever possible into bases for future open Social Democratic workers parties in Russia...."

It is completely natural...for the party to try to see to it that the revolutionary non-party organizations should accept the leadership of the party, its program and tactics.⁹⁰

Bitter disagreement broke out within the Bolshevik Committee of St. Petersburg concerning the correct attitude toward the Soviet, and only Lenin's return and his positive evaluation of the Soviet reunited the party's ranks.

Lenin's return to St. Petersburg toward the end of 1905, is not convincingly documented by the Soviet historians of the 1920's. In spite

⁸⁹Shestakov singles out Zemliachka as the opponent to the formation of a Soviet in Moscow.

⁹⁰Nevskii, Sovety i vooruzhennoe vosstanie v 1905 godu, p. 84. The Bolshevik attitude toward the Soviet in 1905 was at first similar to their views on the Trade Unions. Both types of organizations were "legal and semi-legal workers' societies" and the Bolsheviks sought direction concerning their relations to these organizations in the resolution on open political action formulated at the III Congress. As a result, the attempts that were made by the Bolsheviks in the spring and summer of 1905 to influence several Trade Unions were successful. In Moscow and Saratov the Bolsheviks were able to introduce the program of the RSDRP into the statutes of several unions. For a detailed discussion on Bolshevik relations with the Trade Unions in 1905, see Iu. Milonov, "Partiia i professional'nye soiuzy v 1905 godu," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 1, 1926, pp. 93-118, and the introductory chapter of A. Kats and Iu. Milonov, Professional'noe dvizhenie, op. cit., pp. 77 ff.

of the personal safety from arrest that existed during the "days of freedom," Lenin's illegal status caused him to shun open public appearances. His activities and relations with party workers are vividly described in numerous memoirs,⁹¹ but in official party textbooks his voice is heard mainly through his articles in Novaia Zhizn. Very little is said about his one public appearance before the Soviet during the lock-out campaign, an appearance that has so dramatically been recreated by later historians and artists.⁹² Instead we are told in general terms that he visited the St. Petersburg Soviet and followed its activities with great interest. But the fact that he was extremely impressed with what he saw and heard is strongly emphasized.

He said then [recalls Gorev] that the Soviet was the germ of that dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants which he had advocated since the spring of 1905. Let deputies from the peasants also join, he said, and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies will be an organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.⁹³

Having correctly identified the Soviet as an organ of the democratic dictatorship -- or more specifically, as the prototype for the provisional revolutionary government -- Soviet historians hasten to show the consistency of Lenin's formulations by quoting passages from Two Tactics, "Socialism and Anarchism" and the quotation already cited above from the "Victory of the Cadets and the Tasks of the Workers' Party."

⁹¹See especially: A. Lunacharskii, "Iz vospominanii o Lenine," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, Nos. 2-3, 1930, pp. 82-90.

⁹²Sverchkov, in his Na zare revoliutsii (Moscow: Gos. izd., 1922) does mention the fact that a resolution edited by Lenin on the lockout and the growing unemployment was accepted.

⁹³B. I. Gorev, Iz partiinogo proshlogo: Vospominaniia, 1895-1905, (Leningrad: Gos. izd., 1924), cited by Gorin in Istoriik Marksist I, p.208.

...The Soviet of Workers' Deputies is not a workers' parliament [he said in "Socialism and Anarchism"] and not an organ of proletarian self-government; it is not an organ of self-government at all, but a fighting organization for the achievement of definite aims...⁹⁴

This was a particularly vague statement that Soviet historians could use to good advantage.

Nevsky found that dominant in Lenin's writings on the Soviet and the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry was the premise that no non-party organization may take the place of the fighting party organizations.

...Such a non-party revolutionary organization can sometime supplement, but cannot take the place of a party fighting organization. And here, there is no contradiction with the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat which was developed by Lenin already in May and July 1905.⁹⁵

⁹⁴V. I. Lenin, "Sotsializm i anarkhizm," originally in Novaia Zhism No. 21, Nov. 25 (Dec. 8), 1905. One can well imagine how pleased Soviet historians of the 1920's would have been had they known of the document attributed to Lenin dating from November 1905, but not published until 1940, in which he said: "Maybe I am wrong, but it seems to me...that politically one ought to consider the Soviet as the germ of the provisional revolutionary government. It seems to me that the Soviet ought to proclaim itself as quickly as possible as the provisional revolutionary government of all Russia or (what amounts to the same thing under another form) ought to create the provisional revolutionary government. ...The Soviet ought to choose a strong nucleus of a revolutionary provisional government and complete it with the representatives of all the revolutionary parties and all the revolutionary democrats... We do not fear broadness and difference of shadings, rather we desire it, for without the unification of the proletariat and the peasants, without the fighting union of social democrats and revolutionary democrats, complete victory is impossible." "Nashi zadachi i sovet rabochikh deputatov," Sochineniia, Vol. 10, p. 5, 7-8. Quoted and discussed in B. D. Wolfe, Three Who Made a Revolution, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948), p. 318.

⁹⁵Nevskii, Sovety i vooruzhennoe vosstanie v 1905 godu, p. 85.

Here we find also the concept of party independence as a condition for joining the provisional revolutionary government -- which was expressed in the resolutions of the III Congress -- directly related to the Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

If the Soviets were the embodiment of the provisional revolutionary government, then, by definition, they were to be organs of uprising for the seizure of power -- a formulation which Soviet historians could dramatically extend to 1917:

...if in 1905 the Soviets were thought of by Lenin as organs of a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, leading the bourgeois-democratic revolution to its end, then in 1917, the Soviets were called to be instruments of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, overthrowing the dominance of the bourgeoisie and laying the basis for a socialist order.⁹⁶

Unfortunately, the St. Petersburg Soviet was not a suitable example of an organ of uprising. The workers were willing, but the Menshevik leaders were not.⁹⁷ The slogan "armed uprising," explained Chernomordik, was advanced by both wings of the RSDLP; the differences were in the interpretation and realization of this slogan. The Mensheviks, acknowledging the need and inevitability of armed uprising, believed that the principal task of the party was to make the masses realize this inevitability by way of agitation so they could prepare themselves for this eventuality. This was expressed in their "notorious" slogan "to arm the masses with a burning desire to arm itself." But,

⁹⁶V. Bystrianskii, "Lenin i sovety v pervoi russkoi revoliutsii," Krashaia letopis' No. 2, 1925, p. 18.

⁹⁷Soviet historians present the intra-party struggle within the Soviet of St. Petersburg mainly in terms of the differences concerning armed uprising. Sverchkov, however, staunchly maintained that there was

in actual fact, they did nothing to prepare for a real battle.⁹⁸

In order to point out the fighting character of the Soviets, the historians had to go to the provincial organizations that were established in November and, for a final climax, to the Moscow Soviet which led the celebrated uprising of December 1905.

By showing that the Soviets which were formed in November were more consistently organs of uprising than the St. Petersburg Soviet, historians were able to make two assertions: 1) October was not the high-point of the Revolution of 1905, as was believed by Menshevik historians,⁹⁹ and 2) wherever the leadership of the Soviet was in the hands of the Bolsheviks, it was an organ of uprising. This is, of course, a part of the same train of thought which we have examined earlier and which leads to the superior historical position of Moscow over St. Petersburg, as well as the fact that it was the Bolshevik leadership there that made it so.

complete agreement on this issue. Everyone in the Soviet was in favor of the Bolshevik idea of preparing for uprising -- even Trotsky, who together with the other Mensheviks in the Soviet, were not at that time under the influence of "Martov, Dan and Co." The members of the St. Petersburg Soviet, Sverchkov maintained "...instinctively took the Leninist point of view [and] went along the Leninist road..." (Istorik Marksist, I, 219-220.)

Elsewhere, Sverchkov had made the same assertion concerning the Menshevik demand for turning the Soviet into an organ of revolutionary self-government. It was an issue fought out outside the Soviet, "while inside the Soviet no such struggle took place and the question about it was never raised." ("K voprosu o vozniknovenii soveta rabochikh deputatov," op. cit., p. 290.)

⁹⁸Chernomordik, Moskovskoe vooruzhennoe vosstanie v dekabre 1905 goda, pp. 186-187.

⁹⁹The fact that October was indeed the climax of 1905 was still demonstrated in the mid-1920's by N. A. Rozhkov in his 1905 god: Istoricheskiĭ ocherk. (Leningrad-Moscow: "Kniga," 1926) A rehabilitated Bolshevik historian, Rozhkov was repeatedly criticized for this Menshevik interpretation of 1905, particularly after his death in 1927 when he was post-humously reclassified as a Menshevik historian.

Soviets were divided by the historians into two categories: those that were led by the Mensheviks and were modelled after the St. Petersburg Soviet, and those with Bolshevik leadership which resembled the Moscow organization. Both of them were fighting unions of revolutionary Social Democrats with revolutionary democrats and non-party revolutionary workers.¹⁰⁰ But the first group achieved little distinction because its leaders, "not being in possession of the 'the art of uprising,' rejected the fighting and technical tasks necessary to organize an uprising, expecting instead that change would come about naturally and according to plan.

...Wherever there is no revolutionary activity, wherever there is no revolution of real strength, there appears a singular fatalism.¹⁰¹

Those Menshevik-led Soviets which did become involved in uprisings -- as in Sevastopol, for instance -- were unable to provide the firm leadership needed for victory. The Bolshevik-led Soviets that arose after October, on the other hand, were organized with the intention to fight. The fact that there were two types of Soviets thus precluded any allegation that the Moscow Soviet was a direct descendent of the Menshevik-dominated St. Petersburg Soviet or that it was in any way indebted to a Menshevik organization.

¹⁰⁰Nevskii, Sovety i vooruzhennoe vosstanie v 1905 godu, p. 83.

¹⁰¹Chernomordik, Moskovskoe vooruzhennoe vosstanie v dekabre 1905 godu, p. 33.

S. I. Chernomordik, who avoided the question of factional precedence, concentrated on the nature and activities of the Moscow Soviet and the Federative Committee where the Bolsheviks held undisputed superiority.

It is impossible to say about the Moscow Soviet what comrade Trotsky had said about the St. Petersburg one -- that it was a "parliament of the working class." No, it was a "fighting union of socialists and revolutionary democrats," as it was visualized by Lenin, a union in which our party not only did not lose its identity, but on the contrary, led the Soviet.¹⁰²

Thus Moscow in December offered the Bolshevik party workers and the proletariat of 1905 all the elements necessary for a successful revolution. Textbooks and memoirs relate that already in March -- even before the III Congress "practical steps" had been taken to organize fighting units, the summer had been spent in obtaining arms from abroad and locally, and by mid-November there had been established a "Collegium" (boevaia kollegiia) to coordinate the activities of the fighting units and plan the inevitable uprising. As was the case with earlier uprisings, Soviet historians begin their account by building up an impressive case for ultimate victory and then, confronted by defeat, they are forced to conclude that in fact the preparations had not been sufficient. Thus Chernomordik sums up his account of the preparations made before the Moscow uprising by saying rather inconsistently:

Undoubtedly the outcome of the Moscow uprising would have been different if it had occurred several months later, when the Bolshevik fighting organization would have been better prepared.¹⁰³

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 198.

Elsewhere, Chernomordik elaborates on the situation in Moscow during the uprising by pointing out that numerically the forces of the revolutionaries and those of the government were nearly equally matched and that a proletarian victory was quite conceivable had military reinforcements not arrived from St. Petersburg.

Imagine that the revolutionaries had been somewhat better organized and that we could have prevented the Semenovtsy [Semenovsky Guards] from arriving, by destroying the Nicholaevsky Railroad. We could have won. I believe this could have happened and the revolution could have been victorious.¹⁰⁴

Just a little more time, Chernomordik pleads retrospectively, and Lenin's revolutionary formula would have been carried out.

Many of the Bolshevik leaders in Moscow realized how weak their fighting capabilities still were, but they had no choice -- a strike without an armed uprising was no longer conceivable and a general strike was demanded by everyone in response to the revolutionary defeat in St. Petersburg.

We are told that the Bolsheviks in Moscow tried to delay the uprising, to win time and make the movement stronger, to improve the relations with the armed forces and to win over still greater numbers of workers by means of agitation. "Thus it is no surprise that during the first days the leaders were more occupied with meetings than with uprising," Chernomordik remarked.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴Chernomordik, "Dekabr'skoe vooruzhennoe vosstanie," op. cit., p. 240.

¹⁰⁵Chernomordik, Moskovskoe vooruzhennoe vosstanie v dekabre 1905 goda, p. 78.

The reader is now presented with probably the most ironic turn of events in the entire story of Bolshevnik efforts to obtain leadership and organize a popularly-supported uprising: the Bolshevniks try to delay an armed uprising, but the tsarist government forces them to carry out their most stirring battle-cry.

...the course of events destroyed all plans of the leaders [to delay the uprising]. While the revolutionary organizations did not want to force the events, the tsarist government did not want to leave the initiative to the revolutionaries. The tsarist government itself decided to hasten the change from strike to armed uprising.¹⁰⁶

And so the Bolshevniks took upon their shoulders the burden of leadership of the revolution. Why did they do this? Was it just to seize the leadership? No, they did it because no other group or organization could or wanted to do this. The Menshevniks were not sufficiently decisive and the Socialist Revolutionaries were capable only of rhetoric..., while the inexperienced Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies was not yet ready either for leadership or for organizing the revolution.

The Moscow Bolshevniks recognized that historical mission with which the revolution had charged them.¹⁰⁷

Eventual defeat is thus made somewhat more acceptable: outside forces, "the course of events," as well as a lack of effective support from other opposition groups reconcile the reader to the tragic outcome of the uprising and make him aware of the great heroism of the revolutionaries, who in spite of their unfavorable position, still accepted the challenge and nearly gained a decisive victory.

But the Soviet historians were not so much concerned with finding excuses. 1905 was the proper time to make mistakes so that lessons could be drawn from those mistakes. With victory within the

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 60.

grasp of the revolutionaries, the eventual defeat of the Moscow proletariat was far from ignominious. It ended not in despair, but with renewed hope -- with the knowledge that "next time" they would surely triumph.

Historians describe in fine detail the day to day encounters of enemy forces -- the commotion, the confusion and the bloodshed in the barricaded streets of workers' districts, but a major portion of the story of the uprising is reserved for an analysis of the defeat. Here, in a most forceful recapitulation, we see the Soviet historians confronting actual events with the teachings of Lenin. The narrative ends and the self-criticism begins.

The basic reasons for defeat were not difficult to formulate, for Lenin had conveniently worked out the lessons revolutionaries were to learn in his "remarkable article, worthy of the most careful study"¹⁰⁸ -- "The Lessons of the Moscow Uprising."

Two major weaknesses were emphasized by Lenin: the party's leadership was not sufficiently strong when it was needed most and the army was not brought to the side of the revolutionaries. The third lesson taught by Moscow -- the use of new, technical methods of partisan warfare -- had in fact been carried out, but had not been sufficiently coordinated.

And so, once more, the historian had to deal with the basic problem of revolutionary tactics: the implementation of these revolutionary tactics -- the problem of leadership, of adapting theory to

¹⁰⁸Bystrianskii, "Lenin i sovety v pervoi russkoi revoliutsii," op. cit., p. 18.

practice. Giving the proletariat greater credit for revolutionary initiative than its leaders, Lenin described the events in the following way:

The proletariat sensed the change in the objective conditions of the struggle and the need for a transition from the strike to an uprising sooner than its leaders. As is always the case, practice marched ahead of theory. A peaceful strike and demonstrations immediately ceased to satisfy the workers; they asked: what was to be done next? And they demanded more resolute action. The instructions to set up barricades reached the districts exceedingly late, when barricades were already being erected in the centre. The workers set to in large numbers, but even this did not satisfy them: they wanted to know: what was to be done next? -- they demanded active measures. In December we, the leaders of the Social-Democratic proletariat behaved like a commander-in-chief who had arranged the disposition of his troops in such an absurd way that most of them remained out of action. The masses of the workers demanded, but failed to receive, instructions for resolute mass action.¹⁰⁹

The reader must come to the conclusion that in itself the Moscow uprising was really not greatly different from earlier uprisings. Valiant attempts to carry out the correct tactics invariably had met with failure.

Before the beginning of the uprising, agitation had been carried on within the barracks of the Moscow garrison.¹¹⁰ The most promising results were the disturbances which broke out in the Rostov grenadier regiment on December 2. The soldiers seized rifles, machine guns and ammunition, but the authorities, now greatly alarmed, managed to suppress the revolt before it was able to join forces with the proletariat in the city.

¹⁰⁹ cited by V. Bystrianskii, "Lenin kak teoretik vooruzhennoe vosstania v pervoi russkoi burzhuaznoi revoliutsii 1905 - 1907 gg.," op. cit., p. 26.

¹¹⁰ For a detailed study on the revolutionary work done among the troops stationed in St. Petersburg, see: M. Akhun and V. Petrov, "Revoliutsionnai rabota v voiskakh peterburgskovo garnizona," Krasnaia letopis' No. 4, 1925, pp. 42 ff.

Lenin described the failure of the Moscow party workers to bring the troops over to the rebels' side in this oft-quoted passage:

It is necessary...to carry on work among the troops. But we must not imagine that the troops will come over to our side at one stroke, as it were, as a result of persuasion, or their own convictions. The Moscow insurrection clearly proved how stereotyped and lifeless this view is. As a matter of fact, the wavering of the troops, which is inevitable in every truly popular movement, leads to a real fight for the troops whenever the revolutionary struggle becomes more acute. The Moscow uprising presented an example of the desperate, frantic struggle for the troops that takes place between the reaction and the revolution. Dubasov himself declared that only five thousand out of fifteen thousand men of the Moscow garrison were reliable. The government restrained the waverers by the most diverse and most desperate measures: they appealed to them, flattered them, bribed them, presented them with watches, money, etc.; they doped them with vodka, they lied to them, threatened them, confined them to barracks and disarmed them; and those soldiers who were suspected of being least reliable were removed by treachery and violence. We must have the courage to confess openly and unreservedly that in this respect we lagged behind the government. We failed to utilize the forces at our disposal to wage an active, bold, resourceful and aggressive fight for the wavering troops, like that successfully waged by the government. ¹¹¹

On December 7, the day the general strike began in Moscow, the Federative Committee realized that the revolutionaries would be unable to obtain weapons from the soldiers or from any other source and decided, according to Vasili ov-Iuzhin,

To give the order to the fighting units to disarm forcefully policemen and officers and to try to seize arms warehouses, so as to replenish our low supplies of firearms in this way. For the future it is suggested to make raids on police stations, to which, as we knew, rifles were sent for the arming of policemen.¹¹²

¹¹¹Cited by V. Bystrianskii, "Lenin kak teoretik vooruzhennogo vosstania v pervoi russkoi burzhuznoi revoliutsii 1905-1907 gg.," op. cit., p. 26.

¹¹²M. Vasil'ev-Iuzhin, "Moskovskii sovet rabochikh deputatov v 1905 g.," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 5, 1925, p. 110, also cited in Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 545.

That same evening, the entire Federative Committee was arrested and the uprising was left without a centralized leadership.

The uprising took its course spontaneously, and the party organization was not able to direct the uprising into the right channel. The masses rushed into this battle, it had yearned for this battle, while the party organization still did not know how to lead the events...¹¹³

Each district of the city was now led by its own neighborhood Soviet, which became a combined headquarter for fighting units and municipal administration.

After the police and army units had raided the Aquarium Theater on the night of December 8, while a meeting of some 12,000 strikers and political leaders was taking place, barricades began to appear in the various parts of the city. The first barricade, graphically described by Chernomordik and by other eyewitnesses, was set up spontaneously, before any official order to do so had been issued.¹¹⁴

Memoir and documentary material concerning the first days of the uprising showed no definable pattern or consistency, according to Chernomordik, and he felt that this characteristic was an exact reflection of the planlessness of the uprising itself.

But, he continued looking back at the events, it is possible to ascertain some kind of regularity and consistency,

In the first place, it can be established that the uprising...took the form of a barricade and partisan struggle.

In the second place, that the uprising began from the outskirts to the center.

... In the third place, the uprising was gradually and unnoticeably driven back from the center, removed (or more correctly, it seemed locked up) in the districts -- Presnia, Zamoskvorechie, Simonov.¹¹⁵

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Chernomordik, Moskovskoe vooruzhennoe vosstanie v dekabre 1905 goda, p. 103 ff.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 105.

The outline that Chernomordik saw in the course of the uprising seemed to have been planned by a transcendental force:

Arising spontaneously, the armed struggle gradually began to take on some sort of an organized delineation -- the barricades embraced the Sadovoi Circle as if it had the aim of squeezing the center of Moscow.¹¹⁶

Wondrous though the spontaneous actions of the fighting Moscovites may have been, it could not triumph without competent people to lead it. The Partisan "Collegium" formed by the Bolsheviki never obtain effective control over their fighting units scattered throughout the city. So poorly coordinated were the various organizations concerned with the revolutionary movement that D. D. Gimmer, the Chief of Staff of the Collegium and L. N. Kudriavtsev, the Chairman of that body, learned that a general strike and uprising were to take place only by reading about it in the newspaper on the morning of December 7. After vain efforts to find a suitable excuse to "liquidate the strike," the Collegium felt that "nothing else remained than to take upon itself the leadership of the uprising with the main attention not on victory, but on the conservation of the vital strength of the Moscow proletariat and its courage."¹¹⁷

As a result of the lack of communication between districts and between organizations, many available fighting units were not deployed to the best advantage, and, waiting for instructions from the Moscow Soviet, they missed favorable opportunities for armed assaults on

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Review of Piatyi god, sbornik pervyi, pod red. S. Chernomordika (Moscow, 1925), in Krasnaia letopis', No. 3, 1925, p. 271.

government forces. "This situation emphasized still more the fact that the Moscow Committee and the Party and the Moscow Soviet were not prepared for uprising."¹¹⁸

A most important factor causing the defeat of the Moscow uprising was a lack of national coordination. Uprisings had occurred throughout the year. One had touched off the next, but not one had come to the aid of another. Similarly, peasant uprisings were shown to have coincided in time with proletarian uprisings, but no direct support from the countryside had come to the cities. Just as Moscow had not been able to support St. Petersburg, so too was Moscow isolated in December. "The movement had got 'strung out' like at a horse race," said Pokrovsky, and "this was the principal asset of tsarism in the tremendous struggle."¹¹⁹

What, then, had changed since the beginning of the year? On January 9, 1905, the Bolsheviks had faced the elemental force of mass action for the first time and had drawn from that confrontation the lessons encompassed in the resolutions of the III Congress. Armed uprising became the principal slogan that inspired the Bolshevik faction throughout the rest of the year. Month after month, strikes and demonstrations strengthened both the leadership and the proletariat in their efforts to overthrow autocracy, but not sufficiently to achieve victory. Party leadership did not appear when and where it was needed, the spontaneity of the masses often led the leaders to make use of new and unorthodox organizations. Just as the party workers

¹¹⁸ Iaroslavskii, op. cit., p. 550.

¹¹⁹ Pokrovsky, Brief History, II, p. 181.

in 1905 had to improvise and adjust their tactics to current needs, so too did the Soviet historians turn this way and that in order to maintain the consistency of theory and practice. The difficulty, to be sure, was the delicate balancing of party leadership and popular spontaneity: Lenin's problem had become a historiographical problem as well.

While the problem of leadership remained in essence the same from January to December, the Moscow uprising was no longer comparable to the strikes and street fighting that followed the workers' procession to the Winter Palace. In the interpretation of Soviet historians, 1905 is the year of preparation for 1917, and the reader is left with the strong conviction that the preparations which were begun at the III Congress had in fact neared completion in December. Lenin's theory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, its class content and driving force, had been clearly delineated and indicated a straight road to socialism; the Social Democratic Party had become torn into two independent political groups; the role of the social classes in Russia had become well defined by their actions during 1905; the working class had grown in political maturity and the Bolsheviks were beginning to learn from their experiences how to lead them. And, best of all, an organ of uprising for the seizure of power had been tested -- a model for the provisional revolutionary government of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry had arisen in the

in the form of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

Thus, a technical victory or defeat was not really of the greatest consequence. The important thing was that the revolutionary forces had reached a state of readiness -- had accumulated the necessary experience -- to bring the bourgeois-democratic revolution to its end at the very next opportunity.

During a discussion on 1905 held by the Society of Marxist Historians in 1926, Pokrovsky gave an idea of the psychological lesson learned in 1905:

...We must evaluate the December uprising of 1905 as a rehearsal of October. You see how easy and simple it became to shoot in February and October 1917. There was no longer any argument about whether it is possible to have armed uprising -- only about its expediency at a given moment.¹²⁰

Some historians of the 1920's came dangerously close to the Trotskyite sin of merging the 1905 Revolution with the one in 1917:

In 1905 there was not one revolution, but two revolutions, [said Chernomordik]. The revolution of October, when all the classes of our country took part in it -- the so-called [by Chernomordik] national revolution; and the December revolution -- the proletarian revolution. There were two, just as in 1917: the February national revolution, and the proletarian revolution in October. If one seeks a succession in these revolutions, then it is impossible to establish a chronological succession here and say: There was October 1905, then December, then February, then October 1917... The February 1917 revolution was a continuation of the October Strike of 1905, i.e., that revolution in which all the classes of society took part. The continuation of December 1905 was October 1917. This is the second proletarian revolution, which was the continuation of the December uprising, the first proletarian revolution.¹²¹

¹²⁰

Pokrovskii, Istorik Marksist, I, 1926, p. 253.

¹²¹

Ibid., p. 241. Although Pokrovsky did not agree with Chernomordik's assertion that the proletariat fought alone in December 1905,

It is therefore understandable why Soviet historians tended to deemphasize any fundamentally new theoretical or tactical lessons Lenin may have learned during the latter part of 1905:¹²² the plan was a good one, for December 1905 was the direct precursor of October 1917; only the implementation of these ideas left room for a great deal of improvement. Next time, the lesson of 1905 seemed to demand, do it again, but do it well.

In this connection, Soviet historians were fond of contrasting two quotations -- a fondness maintained to the present day:

he had himself previously called 1905 "Our First Proletarian Revolution." This was the name Pokrovsky had composed after having rejected all other possibilities as unsuitable: He did not want to call 1905 "The Russian Revolution of 1905" because other nationalities had taken part in it; he did not want to use the word "Rossiiskaia" because it referred to the Russian empire, which in the mid-1920's was known as the RSFSR. Hence: "Our First Proletarian Revolution;" which included all nationalities, "and as the 'rehearsal' for the October Revolution it establishes the beginning of the contemporary proletarian movement in the whole world." Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 11, 1924, p. 9.)

¹²²But the 1920's were not yet years of standardization in historiography, and we find the following statement by Baturin: "It appears there was nothing for the Bolsheviks in 1917 to do than to develop the teachings of Lenin which 'were worked out already long ago.' All the conclusions and all the measures taken by them in 1917 resulted from the ideas of 1905...as if 1917 with its imperialist war and February Revolution did not propagate in Lenin any new ideas." (Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 1, 1926, p. 256.)

"The untimely political strike led to armed uprising in Moscow, Rostov, etc. The strength of the proletariat proved to be inadequate for victory. This circumstance was not difficult to foresee, and therefore they should not have taken up arms."

-- G. V. Plekhanov

"On the contrary, we should have taken to arms more resolutely, energetically and aggressively; we should have explained to the masses that it was impossible to confine ourselves to a peaceful strike and that a fearless and relentless armed fight was indispensable."

-- N. Lenin

SUMMARY

The foregoing study of the Soviet interpretation of the 1905 Revolution has touched upon two essential parts of Bolshevik historiography: the organizational and cultural background of the party historians of the 1920's, and the historiographical problems they faced in their analysis of the 1905 Revolution.

The Soviet historians of the 1920's who specialized in the First Russian Revolution were, in the majority of cases, "old guard" Bolsheviks who had taken a personal part in both the 1905 and the 1917 revolutions. No matter how sophisticated their methodology may have become over the years, they were, in essence, writing about themselves or about people very much like them. They had always been the official proponents of the teachings of Lenin. They had made up the articulate, literary sector of the professional revolutionaries which Lenin had recruited and trained to mould the spontaneous mass movement in Russia into a conscious political entity. And, in a sense, this was what they were still doing in the 1920's. On the one hand, they provided the guidelines for a correct interpretation of party history to the newly trained Soviet historians and they provided the reading public with the proper party consciousness to conform to the current political situation. On the other hand, they compiled, edited and analyzed the "things that have happened and how they happened" in Russia in 1905.

The dualism inherent in the story of 1905 -- the interplay of revolutionary theories and their practical results anchored firmly to the political situation of the 1920's -- effectively serves to categorize Soviet research on the Revolution of 1905. The principle of the unity of theory and practice, subsequently to be closely tied to the principle of partiinost',¹ was not a mandatory framework for the party histories of the 1920's. However, a close connection between theory and practice had always been implicit in Marxist thinking and this was vividly reflected in the total output of Soviet research on 1905.

Interest in the theoretical interpretation of the Revolution of 1905 reached a high point toward the end of the 1920's, when Soviet policies toward the industrially underdeveloped countries of Asia and the Middle East made a study of the problems of revolutionary transition mandatory. Lenin's political theories relating to the bourgeois democratic revolution of 1905 served as the key to party historians and government leaders in their efforts to understand and utilize the revolutionary development of other countries.

In order to portray the current revolutionary situation abroad it was necessary to review Russia's own first revolution. This included a thorough analysis of the character and class forces of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Party historians distinguished with great care between the bourgeois character of the revolution -- its

¹G. A. Wetter, Dialectical Materialism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), pp. 256 ff; p. 268.

capitalist nature and its mixed class content -- and the proletarian leadership of this revolution, which would drive bourgeois democracy to its end and attain socialism.

The special place of the peasantry as allies of the workers had to be carefully elucidated in order to crown the theories of the bourgeois revolution with the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry."

Party historians had to wrestle with Lenin's formula for a revolution in which the class forces and the class content did not match -- the bourgeoisie was not allowed to lead its own revolution. Only the workers, with the help of the petty-bourgeois peasants as the rear-guard, could be entrusted with the task of leading the bourgeois revolution to its proper end. It was only then, in the proletarian revolution, that the character and the driving force would in fact be identical.

In addition, the historians had to contend with the theme of the continuous pace of the revolution. On the one hand, the revolution was not to pause in its struggle for socialism after the victory of capitalism, but on the other hand, the revolution was made up of two dissimilar stages -- a bourgeois and a socialist stage. Only by understanding both stages, or more correctly, both revolutions, could one grasp fully the problem of revolutionary transition.

It was the task of the party historians to relate Lenin's theories to the revolutionary development of those countries in the East and in the West that had not yet undergone their bourgeois-

democratic revolution. While the experiences gained in the Russian revolutionary movement were to serve as lessons for other nations, the very existence of a dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union precluded the need for an exact repetition of the Revolution of 1905 elsewhere. On the contrary, the victory of a socialist revolution in one country, through the aid it could give other revolutions, made the capitalist stage dispensable. Thus, the international importance of 1905 -- a revolution which in its economic content was capitalist -- was decreased.

The secondary position that the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905 acquired on the international level was not inconsistent with either its theoretical or practical position in the Russian revolutionary movement. The First Russian Revolution was not one whose end was desirable in itself. It was rather the forerunner of the desired end. The bourgeois-democratic revolution preceded the socialist one; 1905 heralded 1917.

The same theme was carried through by party historians when they treated the actual involvement of the Bolsheviks in the Revolution of 1905. The tactics formulated at the III Congress were firmly based on Lenin's political theories. The goal for the bourgeois-democratic revolution remained the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry whose executive organ was to be a provisional revolutionary government. The means to achieve victory in the bourgeois revolution was an armed uprising led by the proletariat whose traditional instrument of struggle, the general strike, was to signal insurrection and the overthrow of autocracy. The role of the

party as the vanguard of the working class was of central importance, for this was a revolutionary movement based on a class still lacking in political maturity.

In the party histories of the 1920's the confrontation of the politically conscious Bolsheviks with the politically immature workers constitutes the drama of 1905. The attempts that were made by the historians to present a causal relationship between Bolshevik agitation and propaganda and the course of the revolution are overshadowed by admissions that an independent labor movement had evolved its own methods of struggle and its own revolutionary organizations. The working class and its vanguard moved side by side. As the year 1905 progressed, the distance between them diminished but their tracks never merged.

In the Soviets of Workers Deputies the party historians found Lenin's Provisional Revolutionary Government -- the organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. They show us that Lenin correctly identified the Soviets as the new organs of power, but they also make it abundantly clear that the Soviet was not a Bolshevik invention. Nor is any other party given the credit for its emergence. The Soviets were the creations of the workers themselves -- the final embodiment of numerous earlier workers' organizations that had been formed after January 9.

The December uprising in Moscow had also been visualized in Lenin's theories and in the tactics of the Bolsheviks, but again, the leadership of the vanguard fell short of its prescribed role and the revolution failed.

The revolution failed, the tactics had not been carried out with sufficient force, but the basic theories of Lenin remained intact. The experiences gained by the defeat in 1905, coupled with a renewed determination to carry out Lenin's precepts, made possible the victory of 1917. This was the proper function of the year 1905 in Soviet history: it was the "dress rehearsal" for October. As such, its weaknesses had to be exposed so that the actors could learn from their mistakes and make the coming performance a perfect success.

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